Strategic Career Development Tools for Diversified Independent Industrial Designers

Explorations of entrepreneurial career planning strategies for emerging independent industrial designers

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Abstract

Traditionally, independent practitioners in the profession of industrial design, both individually and in group practice, have operated as freelance design consultants for manufacturers. Recently, however, a growing number of new entrepreneurial operational models for independent practice, including serial self-production and limited edition production facilitated through design/art gallery representation, have become prominent. Yet these rapidly evolving practice models, in combination with a relative lack of available information concerning these models, present difficult challenges for emerging independent industrial designers in the hyper-competitive freelance environment that is typical in the industrial design world. Using both a survey of independent industrial designers and self-reflective case studies, this paper investigates and documents the growing array of career pathways available to independent designers and illuminates superior and inferior practices. This research then is applied directly to create a series of visual tools or information graphics which will informally stimulate the development of effective career strategies for successful independent design practices.

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1.0 Personal Statement

Throughout my career, I have been consistently impressed with the passion, ambition, and persistence displayed by the freelance industrial designers with whom I have collaborated. Subsequent to my graduation from design school, I followed a career path that culminated in my becoming co-owner of a manufacturing company. This company produced both my own and the designs of others. Today, however, I am no longer with the company. Instead, I am a freelance designer facing the challenges inherent in the development of a portfolio of designs and the realization of these designs in the marketplace. My experience as a designer and manufacturer thus permits me to appreciate intimately both the ambitions of and challenges facing recent design school graduates. I approach these challenges from an evolving perspective that is founded on my unique entrepreneurial industry experience and is inspired by the research contained in this thesis. Ultimately, I am intent on formalizing the results of my research within a career strategy development process. Working as an instructor of furniture design, I have learned that young designers intent on following the independent career route are eager for strategic advice. To increase the value of this thesis, I have drawn upon the independent spirit of many designers, each of whom has contributed their diverse experiences to this research.

2.0 Introduction & Context

> Today, designer/entrepreneurs can do more than challenge the system of industrial production; they can establish their own niches in it. The market is ready for a resurgence of small designer/entrepreneurs who work outside mainstream manufacturing.
>
> Victor Margolin, (Margolin 2)

The entrepreneur, since the inception of the field of industrial design during the latter part of the nineteenth century, has been integral to the profession. Examples of early entrepreneurial activity in design thus are evident prior to the emergence of the term "industrial design" in the 1920's (Weder 24). These include advocates of the Arts and Crafts Movement, such as William Morris' Arts and Crafts workshops in the United Kingdom and the Roycrofters in the United States, and later German groups, such as the Weiner Werkstätte, Deutscher Werkbund, and Bauhaus (Heller 7). These organizations, which produced and distributed hand-made products, such as textiles and furniture, were largely ideological and rejected the industrialization of society (7). Further, they were entrepreneurial insofar as they produced products that were "unbound by client (industrial) interference but [were] receptive to free market needs" (8). They also "sought to challenge the dominant production paradigm" (Margolin 1). The emergence of designers who controlled the production and distribution of their own designs and assumed the risk of business development thus signified the birth of the design entrepreneur.

In his work, Victor Margolin has indicated that these ideological groups faced increasing contradictions and pressures as the growing marketplace pushed the limits of craft-based production practices (Margolin 2). Production issues—as well as global conflict—tempered the development of entrepreneurial design activity during this early period. Yet industrial designers also gradually increased their contributions to and acceptance of their role in industrial production. Describing this shift, pioneering industrial designer George Nelson wrote in 1934:

> The success of industrial designers is symptomatic of a changing attitude on the part of manufacturers, a growing recognition of the old American ideal of progress: cheaper and better goods for all. (Weder 25)

From 1930 to 1990, the most popular independent business model employed by industrial designers, such as Raymond Loewy, was to provide consulting services for manufacturing clients. Though these consultancies often had entrepreneurial origins as small independent businesses, many grew to occupy and operate from large offices in business centers such as New York City. As the marketplace for new products evolved during the twentieth century, the role of the independent industrial designer also changed. By 1971, for example, Nelson had retreated from his previous optimism regarding his profession. Instead, he wrote discouragingly that "the designer began as the man who persuaded industry to make those dreary household gadgets and appliances look glamorous" (Weder 25). He lamented that the promise of new and high quality manufacturing materials and production processes had been pre-empted by market forces that pressured industry to produce high-

volume products with low production costs and poor quality (Weder 26). The modern industrial designer's reduced role within North America's manufacturing industry thus challenges designers to modify their independent industrial design practice models to meet current market conditions. As a relatively young profession entering a new century, models of professional practice for industrial design continue to evolve. Anne Burdick asserts that "the profession is undergoing [a] massive transformation" (Burdick). This transformation is evident in the increasing number of innovative practice models that independent industrial designers are employing. These include, but are not limited to, serial self-production (or micro-manufacturing) and limited edition production that is facilitated by design and art gallery representation. These new methodologies share an entrepreneurial component and are leading independent design practices into uncharted territory.

A significant factor in the recent emergence of entrepreneurial and independent design practices is the rise of the do-it-yourself movement. Significant technological innovations have spurred a do-it-yourself culture that permeates every art and industry, including industrial design. Ellen Lupton traces the roots of this phenomenon to the rise of desktop publishing, which "delivered digital design tools to the general public" (Lupton 19), in the 1980's. Similar to writers who publish their own books and filmmakers who distribute their own films, contemporary industrial designers have utilized technology to take control of every aspect of their creative work. This includes research, creating prototypes, sourcing materials, manufacturing, marketing, and distribution.

Increased accessibility to outsourced industrial production and material sourcing has greatly reduced the time investment required for self-production. Websites like www.Ponoko.com are popularizing concepts such as *Manufacturing on Demand* for independent designers. Further, new technology has produced significant innovations in the area of distribution. Victor Margolin correctly notes that "an emerging global marketing structure is changing the way that goods are sold" (Margolin 2). The costs traditionally associated with sales and marketing thus have been reduced to an absolute minimum with the introduction of online catalogs and other marketing and distribution tools. These have provided small companies the ability to market their products internationally. The online retail market, in combination with increased access to traditional retailers, also has significantly expanded the marketplace for the small manufacturer and studio producer. Websites such as www.bigcartel.com and www.etsy.com offer open sales opportunities at an accessible cost for designers, artists, and craftspeople. These factors, in addition to a general increase in available information concerning these tools, "enhance the opportunity for innovation" (Margolin 1) and present numerous advantages unavailable to previous generations of entrepreneurial designers. The corresponding increase in the number of entrepreneurial models for independent practice has been documented by several prominent design writers, including Stephen Heller, Ellen Lupton, Anne Burdick, and Victor Margolin. Together, they have noted and fostered an emerging "entrepreneurial posture" (Burdick) within the independent industrial design community.

A shift in the career goals of recent design school graduates also has been observed. A recent survey published in the British design magazine *Icon* found that 45 out of 125 (36%) recent design school graduates sought gallery representation and a career in the new field of Limited Edition Design/Art. In contrast, only 65 of the 125 (54%) graduates sought a traditional position as a freelance design consultant (Fairs, 69). This signifies a significant shift in the aspirations of industrial design students. The survey results inspired me, in turn, to research a more specific question: "How are emerging industrial designers developing independent design career strategies?"

To follow an independent industrial design career route is difficult. Many of the evolving challenges of this route are outlined in Chapter Three of this paper. Indeed, this project is focused directly on this area and is intent on improving the early career development strategy process for independent designers. Chapter Four therefore will contextualize this research by documenting current models of independent industrial design professional practice and by investigating the unique challenges they present to emerging designers.

This thesis then employs a survey of independent industrial designers to illuminate patterns of superior and inferior practices and highlight innovations affecting early career development strategies. An analysis of this survey, which examines the strategies and practice experiences of recent design school graduates who have pursued careers as independent designers, is presented in Chapter Five. The survey was sent to over six hundred recent attendees of international design trade fairs in Milan, Italy, and New York City, U.S. Participants answered questions concerning their career path choices and their experiences regarding career achievements. Questions centered on issues of personal objectives, self-promotion/marketing, practice methodologies, and exhibition experiences at international design fairs.

In Chapter Six, three self-reflective case studies then are presented. They concern the design, development, and distribution, from 2007-2010, of three distinct product collections. The studies document and analyze the strategies utilized to deliver these three product collections to the marketplace and are as follows:

> *L-Series Seating Collection:* Documents the development of a prototype and the fabrication, marketing, and exhibition of a collection of seating products. This case study outlines and analyzes the effectiveness of the strategies that were developed specifically for this speculative freelance design project.
>
> *Spice Mill Collection*: Documents the development of a prototype and the fabrication and marketing of a collection of spice mills. This case study will outline and analyze the effectiveness of the speculative freelance design marketing plan that was developed specifically for this project.
>
> *Board Collection*: Documents the development of a prototype and the fabrication and marketing of a collection of cutting and charcuterie

boards. This case study will outline and analyze the effectiveness of the business strategies developed for this studio production business model.

My experience with design students and emerging industrial designers indicates to me that they have a strong desire for information that can provide guidance concerning their profession. The two major parts of this research therefore are intended to develop a series of accessible visual tools to be used by emerging designers. These are designed to stimulate informally the development of effective early career strategies. These graphic tools are documented in Chapter Seven (*Career Strategy Tools for Independent Designers*) as:

An evolving list of obvious and no-so-obvious practice tips from independent industrial designers from around the world Tool: A set of best practices and an accessible strategy guide for the independent designer.

An Internal Audit for Self-Production Tool: A comprehensive audit system intended to expand and improve upon the early stages of the self-production development cycle.

A Project Pathways for Independent Designers Tool: A decision tree/graphic tool intended to formalize and illustrate the growing number of production and distribution pathways for independent design projects.

A Bootstrap Production & Distribution for Independent Designers Model: A checklist for self-producing designers who are seeking accessible production and distribution.

A Diversified Independent Design Practice Model: A Venn diagram that presents a contemporary industrial design practice.

The conclusion then reflects upon the organic development of this thesis project and the implementation of the *Career Strategy Tools for Independent Designers* into my own design practice. The conclusion also outlines recommendations for the effective use of the strategy tools and possible areas for future research.

3.0 Problem Definition

> I'd be lying to you if I said, "Just do what your heart tells you, stay true to yourself, and things will eventually come"—that's bullshit. It's all about strategies and risks.
>
> Tobias Wong, (Wong)

Developing an entrepreneurial career strategy is not intuitive. An effective career strategy requires a careful analysis of goals, individual strengths and weaknesses, financial realities, and other factors. Independent industrial design is regarded as "one of the most cutthroat industries in existence" (Sheftell). It thus requires practitioners to be extremely strategic in every respect.

Designers who follow the current standard for independent career development need to invest up to ten years cultivating a client base. Only a sizable client base can financially support a viable business. The furniture, lighting, and home accessories industries, in particular, typically require extended periods of time to establish financially sustainable practices. This sector of the design industry—which is the focus of this paper—is extremely competitive and has a large number of international freelance industrial designers competing for commissions from a relatively small group of manufacturers. Further, this competition has only intensified in recent years, a trend noted by designers and design journalists:

> There are too many designers. When I started, there were certain people who you admired but they weren't really in the public eye. Over the last twenty years, it's snowballed, and the media has taken up design wholesale. Now everybody wants to be a designer.
>
> Robert Langhorn, (Langhorn)

> Design is more competitive than ever before, and practitioners get paid less than ever. It will be increasingly rare that any of them will make it to production.
>
> Keiran Long, (Long)

This intense competition within the profession will only increase; since the 1980's, there has been a 2,000 percent global increase in the number of design schools (Tharp/Munson). A recent boom in industrial design schools in China has over 400 schools producing more than ten thousand graduates each year (Tharp/Munson). This competition results in a long career development period for successful independent designers. It also creates high levels of dissatisfaction, unemployment, and attrition.

In response to this increasingly competitive industrial design market, emerging designers must develop entrepreneurial career strategies. However, few design and art schools "actually teach designers how to be entrepreneurs" (Heller, ix). The majority of entrepreneurial industrial designers thus have to research the relevant professional development information independently. This is a challenging task in its own right. As a result, early career development often advances through time consuming methods, such as trial and error, employment experience at larger design firms, peer support, and, in rare occasions, mentorship.

As the industry evolves and becomes more complex, the challenge of developing an effective career strategy only increases. Design school graduates emerge poorly prepared into a hyper-competitive and rapidly diversifying industry. Further, the information available to them is inadequate for the strategic development of their careers. This opinion is commonly held among emerging designers, as is evident in responses to the *Survey of Independent Industrial Designers* implemented for this research:

> Design schools don't prepare the students adequately in preparing designers to work independently.
>
> Survey of Independent Industrial Designers respondent

Industrial design education is adapting slowly to the modern marketplace, developing new programs for the entrepreneurially-minded designer. Steven Heller, who developed a program for graphic designers at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, argues that design schools need to engage in the development of "design-entrepreneurs." Specifically, he states that:

> Schools should not only encourage students to apply their formal training and aesthetic instincts towards self-generated projects, but to develop academic standards so that entrepreneurialism and authorship are routine components of curricula at the undergraduate and graduate levels—not every student is meant to be an entrepreneur—it does take fortitude and stamina to run a business, but it means that the option is viable for those who have what is demanded.
>
> Steven Heller, (Heller ix)

Graduate schools historically have been at the forefront of developing and integrating new fields of research into their programs of study. Victor Margolin stated the benefits of these programs to a large audience at the 2003 Industrial Designers Society of America conference:

> Designer/entrepreneurs should be able to create business plans, identify niches for new products within the emerging global marketplace, and seek appropriate venture capital. Such training is already provided in business schools but without the design ability to actually create new products. For this emerging practice, there should be a Master's Degree in Design Entrepreneurship, tailored for designers who want to be both product innovators and manufacturers.
>
> Victor Margolin, (Margolin 2)

In the fall of 2009, Alastair Fuad-Luke introduced a trial graduate program, the Masters in Entrepreneurship for Creative Practice, at Plymouth College in the United Kingdom. The college is located in a region noted for "increasingly high levels of activity for entrepreneurship education in art, design, and media higher education" (Wayman, 13). In 2007, the Higher Education Academy in London produced a comprehensive study entitled *Creating Entrepreneurship.* The study presented a progressive series of recommendations concerning the future of entrepreneurial education in the U.K. and illustrated the enthusiasm of curriculum developers and department leaders. All design schools—and graduate design schools in particular—share, as Anne Burdick writes, "a commitment to advancing the practice, developing new methods, and generating theoretical models to help sustain the discipline" (Burdick). This statement indicates that, for the profession of industrial design to sustain itself, design schools and the industry must educate emerging practitioners about models of practice that will enable them to sustain entrepreneurial and independent careers.

> The entrepreneurial capacity of the creative industries workforce must be developed if growth is to be maintained and enhanced.
>
> Maureen Wayman, (Wayman)

With the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in graduate design programs, a growing percentage of designers are confidently able to take control of their career development in a diversified and entrepreneurial manner. Young designers increasingly demand knowledge that was previously considered unnecessary. This includes information on topics such as marketing and business management and seeks to answer fundamental questions concerning how things can be done. These often rudimentary questions include: "How do I find a manufacturer for my designs" and "how do I make and distribute my own designs?"

The quality and type of information needed to practice industrial design independently is complicated further by the increasing popularity of diversified practices. That is, designers now employ a combination of different business models to sustain growth within their practice. Such diversified designers need to be fluent in multiple business languages and be adaptable and flexible businesspeople. Many sophisticated design practices operate as highly visible and successful contemporary examples for emerging designers. The Dutch industrial designer Richard Hutten, for example, has a diverse practice that includes consulting for manufacturers, self-producing his own line of products in serial quantities under his brand name, producing limited editions which are sold in galleries, teaching design, and engaging in large scale interior design projects. His practice has evolved over twenty years, diversifying as opportunities, such as the emergence of the limited edition design/art movement, arose. When Hutten graduated from design school in 1989, the aspirations of designers were limited to the establishment of a freelance consultancy—a design office in the traditional format. Today's design graduate has dramatically more ambitious aspirations and often desires to emulate Hutten's diversified practice. Independent designers of the coming generations thus need to possess a different set of career skills. Anne Burdick states that "to prepare for a future in flux, students must learn to be adaptable, agile and strategic" (Burdick). Future design students require a new pedagogy and programs that include the study of entrepreneurial design practices. For emerging independent designers who are not in the educational system, this thesis presents a series of visual tools that offer a significant amount of peer-obtained strategic planning information—as well as entrepreneurial information—in an informal yet direct manner.

The research undertaken for this thesis initially was inspired by a series of "frequently asked questions" repeatedly heard from both students and design colleagues:

1. What practice models should I employ as an independent designer?
2. What strategies should I employ to make my own products?
3. What strategies should I employ to find a manufacturer for my designs?
4. What strategies should I employ to find gallery representation?

These questions form the foundation of the *Survey of Independent Industrial Designers* developed for this thesis and analyzed in Chapter Five. They also are explored through the analysis of three case studies, documented in Chapter Six. This thesis will apply the research results—the best practices for independent design practice—in a series of five readily consumed information graphics that are suitable for online distribution. Further, the tools and the

information they contain ideally will stimulate a dialogue among independent designers that will assist in the development of effective career development strategies.

4.0 Industry analysis: existing models of independent design practice and the challenges they present to the emerging independent designer

4.1 Freelance Design Consultancies

Freelance industrial design consulting for manufacturers is the traditional practice model for the industry; it can be a complex and difficult career to establish, however. Designers often require a dozen years or more to build a financially sustainable practice. New York-based industrial designer Stephen Burks, for example, continues to refer to his high profile practice as "a hobby" after twelve years of well publicized projects with numerous international manufacturers. Long product development cycles and royalty-only compensation agreements can mean several years of product development consulting with little or no financial reimbursement.

> As a designer, you're in a really bad position when you take a design that you do on spec around and show it to companies. In a way you're kind of begging them to make it, and to give you a little royalty. They give you something small, like 2% of net sales. You wind up getting checks once a quarter, for $100 or something.
>
> Scott Henderson, (Henderson)

As stated previously, the industrial design sectors of furniture, home accessories, and lighting design—the focus of this research—are notoriously competitive. Manufacturers in these sectors benefit from a large competitive workforce that presents new design concepts daily on a speculative basis with no compensation. For the freelance designer, a large amount of uncompensated activity is required to develop a clientele. This includes speculative design development, international travel, client networking, and expensive self-promotion at design exhibitions. Financial considerations thus are important factors in the successful development of a freelance career. Increased competition within the industry and the time required to develop personal freelance projects and relationships are additional challenges. The majority of young designers require full-time employment to live, thus limiting the time they have to develop an independent practice.

Despite these financial, time–constraint, and competitive challenges, the "maestro"-style freelance design office—which is disproportionately and unrealistically presented in the media—continues to appeal to emerging designers. Successful freelance design practices are highly visible, with products receiving large amounts of media coverage. This presents recent design school graduates with a seductive career goal. However, aspiring freelance designers face a lengthy process of trial and error and are often disabled by the relative lack of career development information available to them. For the small percentage of designers fortunate to work with a mentor, the career development process is greatly improved. Unlike these lucky few,

the majority of emerging designers are left to rely on their design education, peer support, and work experience to develop a freelance career strategy.

4.2 Self-produced work: serial production

> Designers should also be content producers, attending to their own muses, at least once in their lives.
>
> Stephen Heller,(Heller 2)

The model of self-production is rapidly gaining popularity among independent industrial designers. This model presents a designer with several incentives, including creative control, self-determination, quality control, financial reward, respect, personal brand development, and the realization of designs in the marketplace (Weder 24). Increased competition among freelance designers, the resurgence in craft culture, and greater access to manufacturing channels and distribution also contribute to the popularity of self-production. The motivation behind self-production is described by New York designer Scott Henderson, who left a successful career in a large industrial design consultancy to start a manufacturing company named MINT:

> MINT allows us to put whatever cool little idea we have into reality. We found with MINT that taking a small risk on the product, manufacturing it, and warehousing a quantity of it, instantly set us apart. It dramatically narrows the field of competition. Carrying stock and managing the logistics of it is a step that most designers won't take. We found, when we started MINT, that it wasn't hard to get our products into a lot of stores. We found that the sales pitch was easy. We asked the little design boutiques if they'd like to buy this, and they said yes!
>
> Scott Henderson, (Henderson)

This entrepreneurial model presents a large array of business operation challenges previously unknown to the industrial designer. Self-production is a complex practice model that requires strategic thinking in many areas, including financial planning, sourcing and managing manufacturing processes, developing effective marketing strategies, and coordinating international distribution. Knowledge of this type of business operation is widely available; however, the typical industrial designer is not educated in these areas and a long process of trial and error is commonly necessary.

The self-production model does present independent designers with the option to take control of their creative output and their careers. This is in sharp contrast to the uncertainty and lack of control typical in freelance design consulting. Self-production also offers the independent designer the “excitement and tension of taking decisions on what to progress into realization, seductively outweighing the uncertainty and the risks” (Charney).

4.3 Self-produced work: limited editions and gallery representation

> A designer's royalty for a typical creation for a major Italian furniture manufacturer will never compare to selling five one-offs through a gallery.
>
> Keiran Long, (Long)

Independent designers also are turning toward gallery representation as an alternative to freelance consulting. With traditional consulting, it is becoming—in the words of design journalist Keiran Long—"increasingly rare that any [design] will make it to production" (Long). The recent popularity of conceptual design is a primary factor in the rise of this new practice model, which involves the sponsored production of limited editions that are sold in design and art galleries. This practice model is seen by some as the "ultimate model for the designer as author" (Charney). Further, it offers the designer both comprehensive creative control and the financial support of a gallery, factors not common in either freelance consulting or serial self-production.

Design galleries and the curators who operate them are increasingly important to the career development process of independent designers. The representation of a designer by a gallery can signal to the industry the emergence of a new and important designer. It can result in media coverage and additional projects, including freelance consulting for manufacturers. When Rotterdam-based designer Chris Kabel presented a solo show at a gallery in Paris in 2006, it was seen as "a sign that he is being recognized as a promising independent designer" (Long). Young industrial designers increasingly desire media recognition to advance their careers. The industry also cultivates this strategy, evident in the rise to prominence of the gallery and museum curator. Limited edition self-production and design gallery representation therefore are important in the evolution of the practice of industrial design; they have altered the role of the designer and introduced the curator as an important figure in the development of products and for designer career progress. Keiran Long notes that "it is now the designer, along with the curator, who will decide on the importance of a piece of design" (Long).

The primary challenges of the limited edition and gallery representation career route are similar to the financial, time–constraint, and competitive challenges faced by the independent freelance designer; both routes require a large amount of uncompensated activity to attract the interest of a design gallery or a manufacturer. Limited edition design also is portrayed in the media as a glamorous activity. In reality, very few designers can find gallery representation and the media portrayal misleads young designers (Fairs).

4.4 Diversified practice

Independent industrial designers increasingly operate diverse practices that feature a combination of any or all of the aforementioned business models. These practices also include sectors of design, such as interior, exhibit, and graphic design, that fall outside the purview of this thesis. The financial requirements of an independent design practice necessitates a diversified practice. New York-based designer Harry Allen explains:

> I realized that interiors were a potential source of income and I couldn't ignore it, even though I really wanted to be doing the furniture and lighting and product design. That was really where my heart was. And now, my business is about 50/50.
>
> Harry Allen, (Allen)

This type of diversity is difficult to strategize, however. Emerging designers who work independently are willing to engage in any activity that provides an opportunity to develop their business. Independent designers with varying levels of experience thus use opportunities in design education (teaching) and research (writing) to enhance their practice, both creatively and financially. This type of unfocused practice often is not the ideal career imagined by young designers, however; instead, they idealize the creative freedom and global recognition of the leading independent designers of their generation. Further analyses of established independent design practices illustrate the truism that all independent practices are diverse in nature. This reality is relatively unrecognized by young and emerging industrial designers.

5.0 Analysis: *Survey of Independent Industrial Designers* Best practices in career development strategy

5.1 Introduction

The objective of the *Survey of Independent Industrial Designers (SoIID)* is to summarize the experiences of independent designers and includes:

1. Existing models of practice employed by independent designers
2. Best practices employed by independent self-producers
3. Best practices employed by independent freelance designers
4. Best practices employed by independent gallery designers

With the *SoIID* (appendix 10.3), I set out to document the experiences of independent industrial designers from around the world. I emailed the online survey invitation to 610 designers; these were sourced through the exhibitor indexes of several major design exhibitions, including the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York City, the Salone del Mueble in Milan, and the 100 Percent Design Festival in London. My survey group was limited to independent designers who had taken the initiative to exhibit their work publicly. However, I am confident that this sample group includes designers dedicated to the pursuit of independent design careers and thus provides a good survey of best practices. I received 58 fully completed

surveys from the invited group, a completion rate of 9.5 percent. The *SoIID* consists of 35 questions. Completion time averaged 27 minutes.

The career development strategies for designers varied according to work experience. I therefore have divided survey respondents into three groups, based on years passed since graduation. These three groups are referred to in the survey analysis as *Young Designers, Emerging Designers*, and *Established Designers*:

	Years since graduation		% of survey respondents
Young Designers	0-5	yrs	60.3%
Emerging Designers	6-10	yrs	22.4%
Established Designers	11+	yrs	17.2%

The statistical data results of the *SoIID* are examined throughout this chapter. They effectively document the business practice methodologies of the survey participants. The results have been grouped into three major areas of interest related to career development strategies: business strategies, practice models, and marketing strategies.

5.2 Business strategies: Individual vs. group practice

The *SoIID* illustrates an interesting pattern with regard to how independent designers practice. The survey shows that 46.5 percent of all survey respondents operate their independent design practice in a group format. Filtering this data through the three age groups, the survey found that 37.1 percent of *Young Designers*, 84.6 percent of *Emerging Designers*, and 30 percent of *Established Designers* (q.10) chose to practice in a group format. The survey thus indicates a pattern regarding when independent designers collaborate with their colleagues in independent design practices. This data also suggests that the group format for independent design practice is a temporary strategy—possibly chosen out of financial necessity during the *Emerging Designer* period—that remains important nonetheless.

How is your Independent Industrial Design practice structured? (q.10)

	Individual	Incorporated Individual	Group	Incorporated Group
Young	40.0	22.8	11.4	25.7 %
Emerging	0.0	15.4	46.1	38.5
Established	30.0	40.0	0.0	30.0
Total	**29.3 %**	**24.1 %**	**17.2 %**	**29.3 %**

5.3 Business strategies: Geographic location

> New York's a great place to be. I don't think I would have had nearly the success I have anywhere else. It has an organic quality which is very rare, and it is business oriented. You meet someone, find out what they do, and try to think of someone you think they should know.
>
> David Weeks, (Weeks)

The *SoIID* reveals interesting strategies with regard to where independent designers choose to operate. Respondents were located primarily in Europe and North America (32 and 25, respectively), with three respondents located in Asia (q.4). More specifically, 61 percent of respondents stated their locale to be a "design center" (q.5) and 62.7 percent stated that they live within two hours travel time from their primary design clients (q.6).

In business, it is common to "follow the work;" independent industrial design is no exception. The *SoIID* indicates that designers who locate their practices within major design centers are more satisfied with their career development that those who do not (q.31). This seemingly confirms the commonly held assumption that the major industrial design centers are Milan, London, and New York City.

How satisfied are you with your career development? (q.31)
(1=very unsatisfied)

London / Milan / New York City	3.88 of 5	16 designers
Other Cities	3.56 of 5	39 designers
Toronto	2.57 of 5	7 designers

5.4 Business strategies: Education

The *SoIID* produced a test field wherein 58.6 percent of respondents had only an undergraduate degree and 41.4 percent had a Master's degree (q.1). Among respondents, a higher level of career satisfaction was expressed by designers who had a graduate degree (q.31).

How satisfied are you with your career development? (q.31)
(1= very unsatisfied)

Bachelor's Degree	3.45 of 5
Master's Degree	4.15 of 5

In addition, 16.4 percent of survey respondents rated the career guidance they had received from their educational institution *Good* or *Very Good,* while 58.2 percent rated the guidance they had received as *Poor* or *Very Poor* (q.34).

The level of career development satisfaction expressed by designers is the result of many different factors, including talent and experience. While the results of this survey are not revelatory, they do confirm the value of the traditional career development strategy of obtaining a Master's degree prior to entering the industry.

5.5 Business strategies: Work experience

A particular topic of interest in the creation of the *SoIID* was the work experience held by survey participants. What was the ideal amount of work experience that seemingly enhanced an independent design career? At what point in their career did the majority of independent designers abandon the financial security of full- or part-time employment? Survey results were consistent with expectations in several of these areas, while unexpected in others. For example, the amount of time spent by designers on other jobs while establishing independent practices predictably decreased with experience (q.7).

Do you currently work other jobs? (q.7)

	Yes Full-Time	Yes Part-Time	No
Young	7	15	13
Emerging	1	4	8
Established	0	0	10

The results obtained concerning specific work experience provided several interesting insights into the background of independent designers. Only 19 percent of survey participants claimed work experience within a large (staff of 20 or more) design consultancy (q.9). This suggests that independently oriented or entrepreneurial individuals do not seek out this type of employment. In contrast, the number of respondents who claimed work experience as direct employees of manufacturing companies—36.2 percent—was almost twice as high and suggests that individuals who embrace the entrepreneurial have an interest in manufacturing (q.9).

Design-related work experience (q.9)

Large (Staff of 20 or more) Industrial Design Consultancy	11
Less than Large Industrial Design Consultancy	21
Unpaid Intern at an Industrial Design Consultancy	17
Manufacturing Company	21
Interior Design / Architectural Consultancy	17
Design Education	33

5.6 Business strategies: Workspace

Question 25 of the survey asked designers where they worked:

Workspace (q.25)

I have an office space outside of my residence.	26
I have a prototype workshop.	31
I have a production workshop.	14
I have a distribution warehouse.	7

5.7 Business strategies: Business plan

The strategic planning required to start a business is significant. The *SoIID* therefore set out to investigate the business planning strategies designers implemented in the critical early years of their new businesses. Surprisingly, only 34.5 percent of survey respondents indicated that they had developed a strategic business plan for their career. This is a revealing figure (q.25).

A designer must ask the question, "what type of work do I want to do?", prior to creating a business plan for an independent career. Yet the career goals of young designers continually evolve as they witness the success of colleagues who utilize innovative independent practice models. This is evident in the responses to Question 19 of the *SoIID*, which asks respondents, "which independent design career route is of the most interest to you?" The survey provided the following results:

	Freelance Consultant for Industry	Limited Editions (Galleries)	Serial Production
Young	16	10	9
Emerging	4	1	8
Established	3	4	3

At first glance, the data suggests that *Young Designers* set out with the ideal of the "maestro" design practice as a primary aspiration. This initial aspiration then evolves into a preference for self-production during their *Emerging Designer* period. The challenges inherent in establishing a successful freelance practice direct *Emerging Designers* toward a preference—61.5 percent—for the self-production model (q.19). The limited edition model, in contrast, attracts 44.4 percent of *Established Designers* and indicates the interest of more experienced and successful designers in financial sponsorship and creative autonomy (q.19). Representing the loftiest career aspirations, however, the limited edition practice model is a career goal seemingly limited to designers of extraordinary talent and experience.

The survey results illustrate the potential evolution of aspirations and goals for independent designers during the developmental years of independent practice. These observations need to be considered to create effective and realistic career development strategies and their corresponding business plans.

Financial planning is a critical element of any new business plan. The *SoIID* results indicated that financing was the most prevalent challenge faced by respondents (q.33). The survey revealed that more than half of all respondents did not receive any financial support from family, private investors, or government, thus reinforcing the need for sound financial planning (q.30).

Do you or your group receive financial support? (q.30)

Yes - Family	8
Yes - Private Investor	6
Yes - Government	13
No	31

Achieving financial independence as an independent designer is a lengthy process, as revealed in Question 29. The majority of *Emerging Designers*—designers with 6 to 10 years of experience—have yet to achieve 40 percent of their total income from independent projects.

Please estimate % of your total personal income generated by your independent design projects (q.29)

Young	34.9	%
Emerging	39.2	
Established	72.9	

These survey results indicate the difficulty of independent design practices. The challenge of these business models reinforce the assertion that effective and flexible career development needs to integrate sound business and financial strategies.

5.8 Practice models: Consulting for manufacturers

The *SoIID* provided relevant insight into freelance consulting for the manufacturing industry. In fact, 69 percent of respondents had a minimum of one object in production with a manufacturer and the average designer had 7.5 objects in production (q.11). Comments praising the consulting practice model were consistent with my expectations and experience as a design director for a manufacturing company and through my subsequent freelance design collaborations. Some comments are provided below:

Avoid getting bogged down in marketing distribution, marketing, etc.

Keep design work varied by working for different clients.

No capital to manufacture nor the patience for all of the logistical problems.

Chance to work with major companies.

We enjoy solving the interesting problem of successfully aligning our own aesthetic ambitions with the needs of our business partner and with their customers.

Royalties provide regularity to our income (q.20).

The survey results again indicated the extensive time required to develop an independent consulting practice. This was evident in the total number of manufacturers with whom each of the groups had collaborated:

	Average # of manufacturers
Young	6.7
Emerging	15.0
Established	19.8 (q.12)

In addition, the *SoIID* provided information regarding the daily intricacies and challenges of independent consulting practices. This is evident from the responses to the following questions:

I have received advances on design royalties	23
I have received one-time payments instead of royalties	18
I have had projects cancelled while in development	21
Overall, I have been satisfied with the size of royalties	13
Overall, I have been disappointed with the size of royalties	8
I have experienced non-payment of royalties	8
I have been occasionally disappointed with production quality	24 (q.14)

5.9 Practice models: Self production

A revelatory result of the *SoIID* was that 86.2 percent of survey respondents were involved in some form of self-production (q.18). The overarching factor affecting this issue is the creative autonomy that the practice model permits (q.20). Other factors include:

> *It allows me to focus on what I am best at doing.*
>
> *Low royalty percentages as a freelance consultant means that you either have to be doing very high volume or maintain a high number of products in the marketplace, which is difficult.*
>
> *Retaining the quality of objects by controlling manufacturing* (q.20).

The relative popularity of diverse production formats utilized in self-production was a particular target of the *SoIID*. The respondents who indicated that they were involved in self-production employed the following production methodologies:

I manufacture my own products in serial production in my studio and I distribute them.	16
I use a sub-contractor to manufacture my products (or parts) and I distribute them.	31
My company sub-contracts manufacturing and distribution of my products.	10
I sell my products directly to individual customers from my website or email inquiry.	34

I list and sell my products directly on websites like *Etsy*.	8
I sell products directly to customers at local craft fairs	12
I have fully developed a product, launched it in the marketplace independently and at that point I sold the manufacturing/distribution rights to a major manufacturer.	7
	(q.18)

These methodologies of self-production—several of which are recent developments—present a rapidly evolving number of options for designers choosing this career route. The survey results indicate the evolution of the independent profession. This particularly is evident in the responses to Question 19, wherein 12.1 percent of respondents indicated that they have fully developed a product, launched it on the marketplace independently, and only at a later point divested the manufacturing and distribution rights to a major manufacturer (q.19). This reveals the popularity of the self-production model as a freelance practice to gain manufacturing clients. It is an innovative method that has only recently become prominent.

5.10 Practice models: Limited editions and gallery representation

Of the three practice models featured in the *SoIID*, limited edition production with gallery representation was the rarest; only 48.3 percent of respondents used the model (q.15). Comments in favor of this model include:

> *This provides us with the opportunity to make a far more self-directed aesthetic investigation. In terms of income the results are potentially greater per hour of work done but are very unpredictable.*
>
> *In our gallery work we are able to be far more experimental and push boundaries, which demonstrates our thinking and publicizes our company to potential manufacturing clients* (q.20).

The survey results also indicate that the majority of independent industrial designers who utilize the limited edition practice model are based in Europe: 65.6 percent of Europe-based designers are represented by a gallery, in contrast to only 28.0 percent of North America-based designers (q.15). This result identifies a regional disparity concerning the relative popularity and effectiveness of various independent design practice models. A survey respondent states:

> *I do believe that being a designer in the US vs Europe is very different and your strategy needs to be totally different* (q.20).

With gallery representation, several potential production methodologies are available to realize a physical product. The *SoIID* obtained the following results concerning the production element of the limited edition practice model:

If you are represented by Galleries, do you handle production in-house or through a sub-contractor?

I make my own objects	7	
I have somebody else make them	7	
A combination of the above methods	19	(q.16)

Limited edition production with gallery representation is a challenging practice model; it is strategically difficult to achieve and rightfully requires talent. However, design talent that lacks a proper career strategy often is overlooked.

5.11 Marketing strategies: Overview

Design media, museum curators, and design retailers are becoming increasingly important in the industry. Keiran Long describes this phenomenon as "the rise of the curator class in design" (Long ?). These "power-brokers" have created an influential audience that requires new marketing strategies, yet also provides additional resources for the development and expansion of independent businesses.

Popular marketing strategies for independent design practices include the creation of portfolios with full-scale prototypes and the exhibition of products at international trade fairs. Manufacturers, media, retailers, and curators seek innovative design talent at these fairs. These events foster mutually beneficial relationships and help designers to establish professional profiles and build networks of industry collaborators. *SoIID* responses provide further evidence that exhibitions and the development of materials remain effective marketing tools. In fact, 72.4 percent of survey participants have a portfolio website (q.25) and 65.5 percent have developed a brand or logo for themselves or their group (q.25). The following sections investigate marketing best practices and specifically address the effectiveness of exhibitions, media relations, and networking.

5.12 Marketing strategies: Exhibitions

Major international design trade fairs, such as the Salone del Mueble, ICFF, and 100 Percent Design, remain primary marketing tools for independent designers; this is especially true for the independent designers invited to participate in the *SoIID*. Survey respondents attended an average of 1.93 trade fairs per year (q.21) and utilized trade fairs to connect with manufacturing collaborators, retailers, and gallery curators:

82.5% of consultants connected with manufacturers	(q.13)
44.0% of self-producers connected with retailers	(q.18)
64.3% of limited edition designers connected with galleries	(q.17)

The effectiveness of particular trade fairs commonly is debated within the industrial design community. Each fair attracts a different audience and participants achieve differing levels of commercial success. The *SoIID* indicates that Milan's Salone del Mueble is the most highly regarded, with 31 participants rating their experience at the fair as *satisfied* or *very satisfied* (q.23).

Fair(#of Respondants)	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Milan (40)	1	1	7	19	12
New York (22)	0	4	5	10	3
London (28)	0	2	12	12	2
Tokyo (20)	1	1	9	8	1
Cologne (16)	0	4	8	3	1
Paris(19)	0	2	7	8	2
Toronto (15)	2	2	10	1	0

(q.23)

5.13 Marketing strategies: Media relations

> *We found out that not only working with established brands is almost impossible when you are a young designer without fame.*
>
> *It seems as though you remain as an 'emerging designer' for years, the (modern furniture) industry is arrogant and elitist. It is very tough for young designers to penetrate.*
>
> *SoIID* participants (q.20)

The influence of media in the design industry is profound. Manufacturers seek exposure within a crowded marketplace for their products and designers crave the attention—and critical acceptance—that can set them apart within an intensely competitive industry. Further, manufacturers are interested in freelance consultants who garner media coverage and have the solid reputations that such media attention confers. Similarly, designers want to collaborate with established manufacturers. Entry into this media cycle is an extremely challenging task, however, which requires a sound strategy, perseverance, and talent.

Repeated media exposure is increasingly important for designers. The explosion in the number of media outlets has desensitized the design audience and devalued the impact of singular media events. *SoIID* responses reveal that *Young Designers* obtain media coverage at a higher rate than *Emerging Designers*. This result indicates either that members of the former group use media as a marketing tool more frequently or that the growing number of media outlets—which includes a large number of online design blogs—has simply increased the amount of media exposure available to independent designers (q.26).

	Average # of media 'hits'	
Young	99.48	
Emerging	77.69	(q.26)

The vast increase in the number of media outlets, combined with an equally great explosion in the number of independent designers, necessitates the integration of effective media relations into the marketing strategies of designers. The impact of media as a marketing tool is evident in the *SoIID* results:

45.0% of consultants connected with manufacturers	(q.13)
48.0% of self-producers connected with retailers	(q.18)
75.0% of limited edition designers connected with galleries	(q.17)

The survey also determined which media outlets were preferred by designers. The responses identified over 50 print and online media organizations (q.28). The New York Times was considered by both European and North American independent designers to have the greatest influence in print and online design journalism. The online websites www.notcot.org and www.mocoloco.com were second to the Times in their perceived influence (q.28). A North American survey respondent summarized the importance of media coverage for independent designers:

> European press does not often pull in clients nor result in sales. But it is good to build trust in a designer. The more often they see you in the press, then more credibility.
>
> *SoIID* participant

5.14 Marketing strategies: Networking

Talking with people creates opportunities. For an independent designer, this translates into industry networking. Numerous methods to effectively network were identified in the *SoIID*. Though the creation of networks is enhanced with today's social media, personal and face-to-face interactions remain paramount in the design industry.

Freelance consultants who are connected to manufacturers network in the following ways:

I introduced myself at their stand at a trade fair	33	
I phoned them and arranged a meeting	19	
Referred by another designer	15	
I met them while working in another design office	4	
I met them at a cocktail party, opening, etc.	12	(q.13)

The survey reveals that 36 percent of self-producing designers network with retailers simply by introducing themselves in their shop and presenting materials (q.18). Independent designers represented by galleries network with gallery owners in a similar manner:

I phoned them and arranged a meeting	7	
I was referred by another designer	8	
I met the gallery owner at a cocktail party, opening, etc.	6	(q.17)

Steven Heller notes that "a sense of overarching confidence has washed over a new generation of designers" (Heller 8), an observation that appears to denote a positive attribute in light of the survey results. Networking is an important marketing tool. Active networking thus needs to be integral in a comprehensive career development strategy.

5.15 Summary: Diversified practice model

Most working designers work for manufacturers, clients and galleries—you shouldn't limit yourself to one arena.

Importantly, we find the two disciplines work very well together in much the same way as couture fashion supports ready-to-wear products.

SoIID participants

Results of the *SoIID* indicate the composite nature of contemporary independent industrial design practices. The *Diversified practice model* thus emerged as the strategic approach with the greatest potential to meet the complicated challenges inherent in the development of a successful independent design career. The survey also revealed the enduring importance of exhibition at international trade fairs and provided strong evidence in support of media and networking as essential, career-defining marketing tools.

Diversity and flexibility—the ability to float from one practice model to another between projects—define the *Diversified practice model.* The emergence of this model as a career development strategy has had a profound impact upon me. The analysis of the *SoIID* data and the emergence of this model coincided with the development of my first independent design projects as an individual practitioner. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

6.0 Case Studies: Geoffrey Lilge Design

6.1 Introduction

Since the fall of 2007, my career development strategies have shifted from a singular objective—to operate as a freelance consultant—to a diversified practice that reflects the market conditions and my personal goals. The mission statement of my independent design practice now states:

> To design collections of products to be represented in the marketplace through a freelance design contract arrangement or through self-production/distribution.

This chapter documents three separate independent design projects undertaken concurrent with the development of this thesis: the L40 seating collection, the spice mill collection, and the cutting and charcuterie board collection. In the following sections, I will chronicle the practice models employed for each project and describe the business and marketing strategies utilized in each case.

6.2 Case Study 1: Freelance consulting for manufacturers
L-Series seating collection

In the fall of 2007, I established a brief to design a lounge chair. My goal was to produce a high quality prototype that I could exhibit and market to potential manufacturers. I built a 1:1 scale model that could test the ergonomics of the design while also serve as a full-scale form model. By creating a form model, I sought to avoid alienating potential manufacturers through the suggestion of and restriction to specific materials for the chair. The concept chair was to be exhibited as a form only; production methods could then be determined by the manufacturer and could potentially use any combination of the following: solid wood, bent/laminated plywood, injection molded plastic, die-cast aluminum, and CNC-bent tube metal.

My design was intended to be innovative, since innovation could generate productive press coverage and pique interest from manufacturers. The final concept features armrests that extend into a cantilevered seat support and joinery details that lack sharp corners and edges, providing a soft, visual feel.

L40 Lounge Chair: Prototype; bent plywood, fiberglass, lacquer.

L41 Side Chair: Prototype; bent plywood, fiberglass, lacquer.

International Contemporary Furniture Fair, New York May 2008

In January of 2008, I exhibited the L41 Side Chair at the IDS: Interior Design Show in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Media coverage included a full color photo on the front page of the Style section of The Globe & Mail newspaper and mentions in several online design blogs. Feedback from the show was positive but ultimately unsuccessful in securing a licensing arrangement with a manufacturer.

In the spring of 2008, I prepared marketing materials for upcoming exhibitions, including a website (appendix 10.4), and press release (appendix 10.5). Prior to the exhibitions, I mailed the postcard to a select database of manufacturers, launched the website, and sent out press releases to my media contacts. In early April, the L40 Lounge Chair was featured on the influential design website Dezeen (appendix 10.4). This exposure prompted a notable amount of interest from other media as well as furniture retailers.

In April, I also exhibited the L40 Lounge Chair at Salone Satelitte at the Salone del Mueble in Milan, Italy. It was part of the University of Alberta student display. Through this exhibit, contact with a significant number of media outlets and several manufacturers was established.
In May of 2008, I exhibited both the L40 Lounge Chair and the L41 Side Chair at the ICFF in New York City. I established connections with members

of the design media, several manufacturers, and several established freelance industrial designers.

A promising development occurred at the ICFF. I was approached by representatives of the United States-based company Janus et Cie regarding licensing of the L40 Lounge Chair for the outdoor seating market. In June of 2008, I traveled to Chicago to meet with Janus et Cie representatives in their showroom at the Merchandise Mart during the largest contract furniture trade fair, NeoCon. At this meeting, we discussed developing the L40 Lounge Chair into a series of chairs and tables for the outdoor market. We also discussed the possibility of creating additional seating collections. The concepts for the L40 series in various materials, as well as the additional new seating collections, (appendix 10.6).

The connection with Janus et Cie initially was a positive result of the exhibition process. However, the company was not ideally structured to develop the concept. The development process therefore was slow and ultimately was cancelled due to a number of factors, including:

1. The lack of manufacturing experience: Janus et Cie is primarily a furniture distributor. They were attempting to expand into manufacturing with a line of exclusive products. They were doing this without a product development staff, however; instead, they were relying on the product development staff of sub-contracted manufacturers.
2. The ambiguity of the L40 design: production materials, joinery, and upholstery details were not specified prior to the development process.
3. The lack of a clear design brief regarding preferred production materials from the Sales & Marketing department: the development process changed direction several times as new market demands entered the equation, leading to long delays.
4. A slowdown in the economy in the fall of 2008: a teak prototype of the L40 Chair was scheduled to be completed in October. The project was cancelled, however, due to the economic downturn in the United States.

There are several details of the L40 prototype that could have been improved. In retrospect, these may have detracted from the initial reception of the chair among fair attendees.

1. The chair was not fully developed in a specific material. Upon reflection, it would have been an advantage to present the chair to a manufacturer as it would appear in production, rather than presenting it in an ambiguous manner.
2. The foot stool was not finished and exhibited with the chair. This may have decreased the overall footprint and possible impact of the chair.

3. Upholstery was not added to the chair. This gave the distinct impression that the chair was intended only for outdoor use. It may also have appeared uncomfortable to viewers due to this lack of upholstery. Predetermining the specific furniture category for the chair (indoor or outdoor) would have been better than ambiguity.
4. The color of the L40 prototype was perhaps too neutral to grab the attention of trade fair viewers, who typically look at an exhibit for 1.5 seconds before deciding to stop or to continue. A brighter paint finish and a higher display plinth may have been preferable.

The challenge of building a freelance design consultancy in a location as remote from design centers as Edmonton became apparent during the marketing stages of this case study. This remoteness was an actual detriment during the product development stage. The project would have proceeded more easily with regular client meetings. Additional freelance business also may have arisen with more frequent travel to international trade fairs and their networking opportunities. However, the survey results indicate that an extreme amount of time and travel investments are necessary to develop a strictly freelance practice model, regardless of location. I thus decided to revisit the self-production model for my next project, the spice mill collection.

6.3 Case Study 2: Freelance consulting for manufacturers Spice mill collection

In my experience, formulating design briefs around product categories and materials of interest helps to inspire successful design concepts. Recently, I have been intrigued by kitchen tools. Specifically, I am interested in the large spice mill as a totemic and potential heirloom object. I also am interested in how objects are used within the social dynamic of dining and how design can enhance this experience. The social gesture in which a chef uses a spice mill directly prior to a meal and often before a guest is an example of this social dynamic.

I produced three full-scale working prototypes of my spice mill in walnut. Each features a CNC-milled brass grommet intended to permit the grinder to be hung from an overhead pot rack. This allows the grinder to be suspended safely above a chef's work surface. This functional improvement provides the product concept with an innovative element, while using materials—walnut and brass—that age gracefully and contain the high level of finish typically found in craft objects.

Spice mill prototypes 2009

With self-production in mind, the prototypes were completed in the Industrial Design Workshop at the University of Alberta in the winter of 2009. Difficulties arose when sourcing the parts for the concept, which included: CNC-turned wood parts, a grinding mechanism, and a CNC-milled brass grommet. The wood parts and the grinding mechanism could be sourced at a fair price. The brass component, however, could only be sourced in large volumes and thus would require a sizable investment. Since the collection was going to be expensive to produce locally, I decided to market the design concept to various manufacturers.

I have established contacts at several housewares manufacturing companies. With no planned trade fair exhibitions, I decided to present the spice mill concept to my contacts via email. My objective was to secure a licensing contract. I presented the concept to the following companies in this order:

1. Alessi (Italy)

   The premier manufacturer of tabletop housewares in the world, based in Italy. The company's Managing Director, Mr. Alberto Alessi, has collaborated with over 500 industrial designers since the 1970's. He was a significant source of inspiration during my time as Design Director at Pure Design.

   I sent unsolicited images via email to Mr. Alessi, who replied quickly with the request that I send the prototypes and drawings (appendix 10.8) to Italy for further consideration. After two months and little communication via email, they returned the prototypes. In retrospect, it may have been better to insist on personally delivering the concepts.

2. Ittala (Finland)

   A highly respected company that produces tabletop housewares, located in Finland. I sent unsolicited images to the Design Director, Hiltaa Huikkenenen, who replied via email with a thank you note indicating that they were not currently looking for new concepts in the spice mill category.

3. Joseph Joseph (United Kingdom)

   A new company that is producing a very strong collection of contemporary kitchen tools, primarily in plastic. I received a reply that included the comment that the concept could not "be given justice" if produced in plastic.

4. Umbra (Canada)

   Perhaps Canada's largest design driven manufacturing company, Umbra has achieved large global distribution and has developed a large collection of products for the residential home. In September 2009, I sent images of the spice mills to Paul Rowan, the founder of the company, as well as to Matt Carr, the Design Director. After a period of consideration, Umbra decided to develop the concept; it was to be prototyped and manufactured in China. The product debuted at the New York International Gift Fair in August 2010. It is currently in-stock and available to retailers. The spice mill, named the *Granata,* was featured in the publication *1000 Product Designs,* edited by industrial designer Eric Chan and released by Rockport Publishing in November 2010.

Granata Spice Mill, Walnut and Brass
Photo: Umbra Ltd. (2010)

My experience with the spice mill collection illustrates the need to develop a flexible career strategy and to diversify within a design practice—different design concepts require different practice models to reach the marketplace. The value of networking and direct marketing using email also is evident. The spice mill project, which resulted in a single product that will never reach a mass market through retailers such as Target or WalMart, will not likely become a significant revenue generator for my design practice. I thus intended my next project to achieve what the spice mill collection did not: I planned a simple product with high design and quality values that could be easily sourced and produced locally. This project would permit my design practice to self-produce a reasonably sized collection that would generate income and raise the profile of my design practice.

6.4 Case Study 3: Self production
Cutting and charcuterie board collection

I initiated product development for a cutting and charcuterie board collection in late 2009. I employed a design philosophy similar to the one used to develop the spice mill collection. In addition, the self-production practice model adopted ensured local sourcing and an element of in-house production. Once this production criteria was determined in 2010, I developed a collection of twelve different-sized prototypes. These were produced in hard maple and American black walnut. I also created a catalog and price list (appendix 10.10).

2010 Cutting and Charcuterie Board Collection

I then developed a business plan to implement production and initiate the marketing and distribution of the collection (appendix 10.9). I wanted to create a low-cost business start-up—this was intended to minimize strategically all possible expenses. The project development schedule I established entailed the following:

January	Develop product collection: 12 models (.dxf files)
Febuary	Prototypes round 1 (in-house)
	Source local manufacturers
	Source custom tooling: edge radius
	Source custom wood brand
	Compile retailer email database
	Compile media email database
March	Request for quotation (Supplier #1)
May	Request for quotation (Supplier #2)
August	Prototypes round 2 (Supplier #2)
	Material research (Oil finish): sourcing
	Product photography: in-situ and studio
September	Request for quotation (Supplier #3)
	PDF product catalog
	Calculate wholesale product pricing/margins
	Pricelist
	Finalize business plan (appendix 10.9)
	Prepare studio for serial production: equipment
	Establish business banking account
	Establish shipping account
	Website (Indexhibit)
	Develop marketing copy: "Story of the collection"
	Write press release
October	Prototypes round 3 (Supplier #3)
	Launch event: 29 Armstrong (October 22)
November	Email global press release: print/web
	Direct marketing email to retailers
	Initiate production and distribution

Launch event announcement, October 2010

In developing the marketing plan for the collection, I decided to rebrand my design practice to correspond with the launch of the board collection. This included a new logotype and website *www.geoffreylilge.com* (appendix 10.2).

GeoffreyLilge

Logotype as it appears on a cutting board;

With the bootstrap business plan in mind, product photography was completed in-house, a new website specifically featuring large product photos was developed using free online website development software, *www.indexhibit.com* (appendix 10.12), and an online store to sell the board collection directly to consumers was created using an accessible online service *www.shopify.com* (appendix 10.13).

The board collection project embodies motivations similar to those expressed by other independent industrial designers who have chosen the self-production route. Early customer feedback and product sales indicate that self-production of the board collection will help diversify my independent design practice and ultimately permit it to become financially sustainable.

7.0 Career Strategy Tools for Independent Industrial Designers

7.1 Introduction

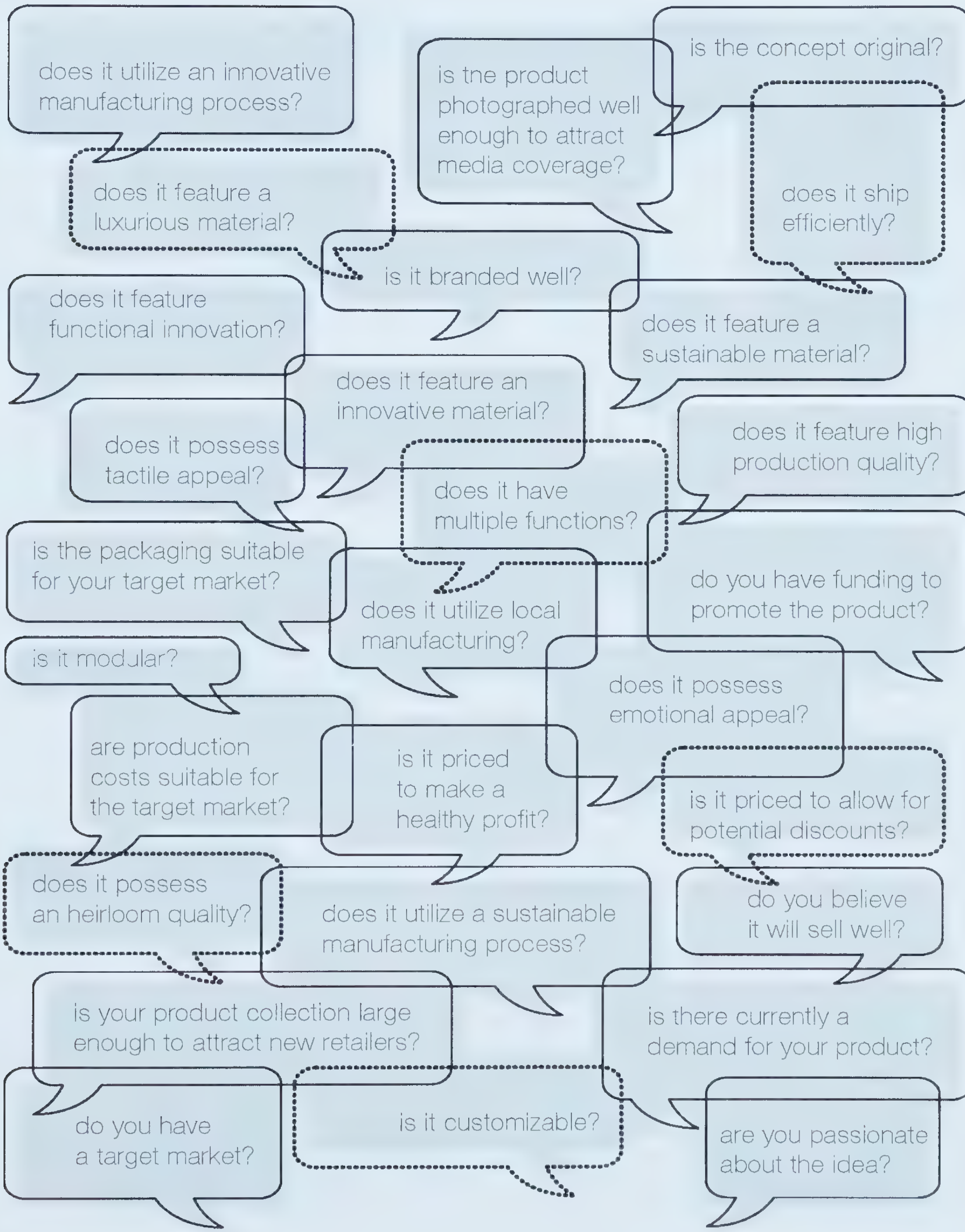
The *SoIID* provided a wealth of insightful career strategy information. Properly utilized, this information is beneficial for designers. Analysis of the case studies is equally valuable. Together, the two data pools can be employed to create unique and intriguing career strategy tools for independent industrial designers.

Communicating this information in an effective way to time-constrained designers who have completed their formal education is a challenge. This thesis thus presents five tools under the title *Career Strategy Tools for Independent Industrial Designers*. These tools were created for informal, brisk consumption and are intended to stimulate discussion of the career strategy process.

7.2 Tool # 1 *An evolving list of obvious and not-so-obvious practice tips from independent industrial designers from around the world* Tool

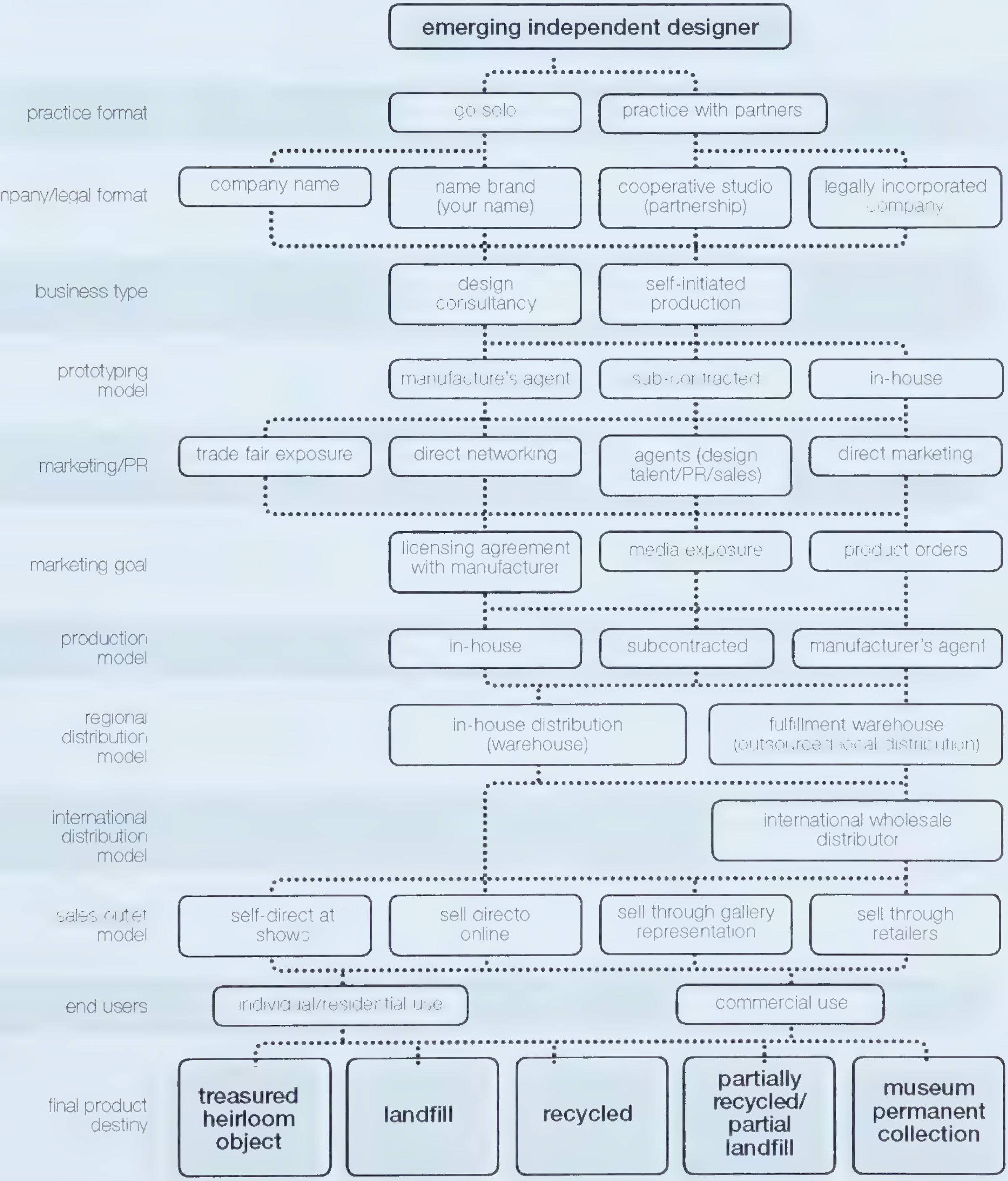
7.3 Tool #2 *Self Production Pre-Start-Up Internal Audit*

An internal audit intended to inspire critical analysis of self-production projects.



7.4 Tool #3 *Project Pathways for Independent Industrial Designers* Tool

A decision tree/graphic tool intended to formalize and illustrate the growing number of production and distribution pathways for independent design projects.



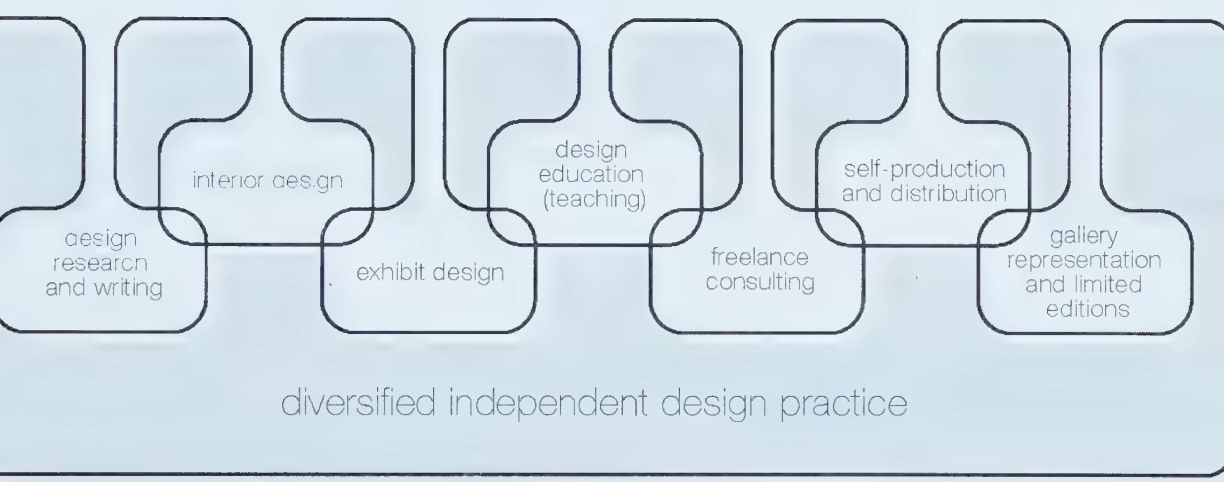
7.5 *Self-Production: Bootstrap Production & Distribution Model*

In creating the business plan for the board collection, I set out to minimize strategically all possible expenses. This resulted in the following set of "bootstrap" self-production start-up guidelines:

minimize overhead expenses	no additional rent for studio/warehouse
minimize business losses	no credit available to customers
maximize cash flow	all orders shipped 100% prepaid
no sales representative expenses	direct email marketing to retailers
no public relations expenses	no press agent
minimize marketing expenses	no printed materials PDF online catalog no mail expenses
no wholesale trade shows	direct email marketing to targeted retailers sample order specials
minimize subcontracting expenses	internalize production costs when suitable
minimize inventory expenses	products made to order
minimize distribution expenses	all shipping done in-house no fulfillment warehouse
minimize shipping costs (parts)	locally sub-contracted parts
maximize direct sales @ 100% retail	direct online sales online retailer drop-ship partners
maximize media coverage	direct email PR campaign/social media
maximize in-house capabilities	product design prototyping photography graphic design website design
utilize cost effective online business tools	shipping (Fedex, UPS) telephone (Skype) publicity (Twitter, Facebook) invoicing (Billing Boss) customs brokerage credit card vendor account (Paypal) online sales engine (Shopify) email marketing (Emma)

7.6 *The Diversified Independent Design Practice* Model

A diagram presenting the *Diversified Independent Design Practice* Model



8.0 Conclusion: A case for the diversified independent industrial designer

> Every career is different.
>
> *SoIID* respondent

Designers who decide to practice independently will most likely achieve success in a manageable time frame if they develop and implement an individual career strategy. In effect, a sustainable career must be designed—an independent career is the most important design project that an industrial designer could ever undertake.

When I planned the first independent design project for this thesis, the L40 seating collection, I had a single practice model as my objective—to be a freelance design consultant for manufacturers. Yet obstacles arose that prevented the realization of this freelance practice model and my goals had to evolve in response. I adapted to the economy and the available design opportunities. Further, I learned from the valuable research compiled through the *SoIID* to create a diversified design practice. The evolution of my practice is evident in the case studies presented in this research. My current design practice reflects the findings of my thesis, as defined in the *Diversified Independent Design Practice* Model. The timeline illustrated below documents my progress:

Des Timeline: Case Studies, Research and Personal Goals

The development of the *Diversified Independent Design Practice* Model has inspired my work as a designer and caused me to reevaluate the philosophy of my design practice. In effect, this thesis has distilled my fifteen years of industry experience and clarified the complexities of independent design practices. This research and the application of the *Career Strategy Tools for Independent Industrial Designers* has been tremendously beneficial to my independent design practice. I am interested in presenting these tools to other independent designers, especially those who are at the beginning stages of their careers. Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills are inherent to effective independent practice—they are readily accessible to those who seek them out. Career development strategies, knowledge, and skills for independent

designers are not readily available, however. These tools thus need to be formatted for online consumption (ideally within an online community of industrial designers, such as *www.Core77.com* or *wwww.designglut.com*). The dissemination of these tools and information then will foster a dialogue among independent industrial designers, leading to their further improvement and the evolution of more effective strategies for career management.

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10.1 Appendix : Research proposal

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF ARTS, SCIENCE & LAW RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Principal Investigator(s):	**Name**: Geoffrey Lilge
	Department/Faculty: Art & Design : Industrial Design, Faculty of Arts
	Campus Address: 3-98 Fine Arts Building
	Campus Phone number: 780-492-4195
	E-mail address: glilge@ualberta.ca
(*If student*)	**Name / Department of Faculty Supervisor:** Tim Antoniuk, Department of Art & Design
	Supervisor's E-mail address: tim.antoniuk@ualberta.ca
	Supervisor's Campus Phone number: 780-492-6354
Project Title:	**Career pathways for emerging independent industrial designers**
Funding Source(s):	**None required**

DATA IS TO BE COLLECTED OUTSIDE OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS

Table of Contents

Summary of Project / Research Design.

There is currently a need in industrial design professional practice education to formalize the growing number of potential career strategies for emerging independent designers. Traditionally, the profession of industrial design has seen independent practitioners operate as freelance design consultants for manufacturers, both individually and in co-operative group practice. Recently, the profession has witnessed several relatively new models of independent practice rise to prominence, including serial self-production/micro-manufacturing and limited edition production/gallery representation.

This thesis project will investigate independent career strategies available to recent graduates of industrial design schools. The research will attempt to obtain data that will illuminate patterns of superior and inferior practices, document exisiting career pathways as well as potentially unveiling innovations in early career development strategy.

My research will consist of four parts:

Part 1. Survey of emerging independent industrial designers

The research survey I have developed will investigate the career development stategy and experiences of recent graduates of design schools who have chosen the independent route. The survey will be sent to recent attendees of international trade fairs located in Milan, Italy and New York City, U.S., with participants located globally. I will be contacting designers whose email contact information I have sourced from published exhibition catalogs. The survey will consist of questions regarding their choice of career path and their experiences achieving their career objectives. Questions will be centered on issues of personal objectives, self-promotion / marketing, practice methodologies and exhibiting experiences at international design fairs.

Part 2. Case Study : Loyal Loot Collective

This case study will document the early career strategy of 4 recent graduates of the Industrial Design program at the University of Alberta. Operating as the design group named Loyal Loot Collective, these young designers have been active independently for five years post-graduation. This case study will involve multiple interviews with the designers, an analysis of past practices and results, with in-depth consultation focusing on business model strategy and future planning.

Part 3. Case Study : Geoffrey Lilge Design

This self reflective case study will document my development and marketing of collection of seating products, and subsequent exhibitions at the Salone de Mobile in Milan, Italy in April, 2008, as well as the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in May of 2008. This case study will outtline and analyze the effectiveness of the freelance design career strategy plan that was developed specifically for this project.

Part 4. Expert Interviews

The fourth part of the research will involve conversations and email dialogue with established independent professionals in the field of industrial design and manufacturing. These individuals will contribute their individual experiences concerning career strategy to the body of research.

The research will aid in the creation of effective career pathway strategy plans for recent graduates of design schools, as well as in the development of a major element of the thesis, a decision tree diagram tool. This graphic tool is intended to illustrate preferred career strategies for the growing number of independent design career pathways.

I believe that this research and the information that I project it will reveal will prove valuable to independent designers in all stages of career development, and beneficial to design educators.

Assessment of Risk to Human Participants:

Part 1. Survey of emerging independent industrial designers

The survey will consist of 45 questions. The questions contain minimal risk of being considering invasive or offensive. Survey data will be analyzed in anonymous form, both individually and as a group.

The risk to designers participating in the survey is minimal, and is no greater than might be expected during a regular undergraduate Industrial Design class. The survey does not ask specific or detailed information regarding participants income, and does not ask for any potentially confidential information regarding the design clients of the participants.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary, and participants may skip any questions they feel uncomfortable answering.

The survey will take place online, located at www.questionpro.com. I have obtained a graduate student licence for the software and the survey will be securely located on their website server.

In my opinion the risk of information being compromised on this website is low. The following statements are are from www.questionpro.com site regarding the details of their privacy policy:

Uses of Information

QuestionPro is a web-based service for conducting surveys. Any information shared with QuestionPro during the creation of a survey is owned solely by the administrator of that survey. By the nature or how our service works, surveys need to be shared via a URL on the Internet. We provide the option to password protect your surveys if they contain sensitive content.

Email addresses uploaded to the system for the purpose of sending survey invitations and email communication are owned solely by the survey administrator. We will never share any information uploaded to the system with any 3rd parties.

Data collected through surveys is owned solely by the survey administrator. By default, the data is only accessible by providing a username and password and logging into the site. There is the option to share online reports via a URL from the administrative account. The survey administrator controls this option. We will never use any of the data collected.

QuestionPro Data Retention Policy : **On-Going Account Data**

1. The System will store data of your surveys/campaigns/polls as long as your account is current and active.
2. If data is removed (User deleting surveys, responses, questions, answers, campaigns, polls etc.) the system will remove the data permanently from the primary database servers immediately. The same data will be present in our backup systems for 7 days, after which it will be removed from all our systems
3. In some cases, if important items (like surveys etc.) are deleted, they may not be removed from our systems immediately. Data may be placed in a recycle bin and permanently removed after 7 days.

Part 2. Case Study : Loyal Loot Collective

The documented interviews and consulting dialogue with the Loyal Loot Collective will be minimally invasive business strategy discussion, with minimal risk to the participants. The interviews will not ask specific information regarding participants income, and does not ask for any potentially confidential information regarding the participants clients or customers.

Part 3. Case Study : Geoffrey Lilge Design

This case study is self-reflective and presents minimal risk.

Part 4. Expert Interviews

The nature of the dialogue with the professionals will be reflective comments on their career decisions to date and will present minimal risk. The interview questions will not ask specific information regarding income, and will not ask for any potentially confidential information regarding the participants clients or customers.

Description of Procedures to be Undertaken to Reduce Risk to Human Subjects.

Part 1. Survey of emerging independent industrial designers

The survey will consist of 45 questions. The questions contain minimal risk of being considering invasive or offensive. Survey data will be analyzed in anonymous form, both individually and as a group.

The Consent Form that will precede the online survey can be seen in Appendix B.

Part 2. Case Study : Loyal Loot Collective

The four individuals who comprise the design collective Loyal Loot will be presented the consent waiver seen in Appendix C. This consent form states that I will obtain written approval from the participants prior to any additional public presentation or publication of their comments beyond the printed thesis support document or the thesis exhibition materials.

Part 3. Case Study : Geoffrey Lilge Design

This case study is self-reflective and presents minimal risk.

Part 4. Expert Interviews

The expert professionals that I will contact for comments will be presented the consent waiver seen in Appendix C. This consent form states that I will obtain written approval from the participants prior to any additional public presentation or publication of their comments beyond the printed thesis support document or the thesis exhibition materials.

I have read the UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS [GFC Policy Manual, Section 66] and agree to abide by these standards in conducting my research.

__________ Signature of Principal Investigator(s)

Date

__________ Signature of Faculty Supervisor/sponsor

__________ Date

Appendix A

Survey Recruitment Email.

Hello,

My name is Geoffrey Lilge and I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta. My thesis project is researching effective career strategies for emerging independent industrial designers such as yourself.

This survey aims to provide answers to questions you might have: which fairs are most productive, which media outlets have proven the most beneficial to designers, which companies are receptive to young designers (and which companies *are not*), and so on...

Hopefully from this dialogue new career strategies will arise for young designers. All information obtained from survey participants will be analyzed in anonymous form only, no names will be released or published.

All participants in the survey will be sent the group results, which should prove to be both illuminating and informative.

Click on the link below to participate, looking forward to hearing from you!

Geoffrey Lilge
Sessional Instructor : Furniture Design
Graduate Student / Industrial Design
Department of Art and Design
University of Alberta
glilge@ualberta.ca

Appendix B

Consent Form : Survey Participants

Independently practicing industrial designers
who graduated from design school after 1996.

This survey has been reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts, Science & Laws Ethics Board and complies with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants.

This survey is for educational purposes only. All information collected will be analyzed in anonymous form only. Any personal information obtained from this survey will be held confidentially and will not be published. You will receive the anonymous group results of this survey upon completion of the survey.

By proceeding to the survey you therefore agree with the above statement. Please be honest with your answers and do not answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with. You also have the right to withdraw from the survey at any point.

Appendix C

Consent Form : Loyal Loot Collective

This research project been reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts, Science & Laws Ethics Board and complies with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants.

This project is for educational purposes only. The focus of this thesis project is researching and developing effective career strategies for emerging independent industrial designers such as yourselves.

Your participation will involve engaging in dialogue concerning your business model strategy as well as an analysis of past practices and results. Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary and it is your right to withdraw at any point. Further, you have the right to request the complete removal of any released materials within 2 weeks of signing this consent form. You are not obliged to answer any question that you feel uncomfortabe with. You also have the right to be quoted anonymously if requested, and the confidentiality of any released materials will also be protected if you request.

Your comments may be used in my thesis document and thesis exhibition. I will obtain your written approval prior to any additional public presentation or publication of any research material containing your comments or images.

By signing below, you agree that you understand the project and agree to participate as described above.

______________ Name	______________ Signature	______________ Date
______________ Name	______________ Signature	______________ Date
______________ Name	______________ Signature	______________ Date
______________ Name	______________ Signature	______________ Date
Geoffrey Lilge Researcher	______________ Signature	______________ Date

Geoffrey Lilge
Sessional Instructor : Furniture Design

Graduate Student / Industrial Design
Department of Art and Design
University of Alberta
glilge@ualberta.ca

Appendix D

Consent Form : Expert Professionals

This research project been reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts, Science & Laws Ethics Board and complies with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants.

This project is for educational purposes only. The focus of this thesis project is researching and developing effective career strategies for emerging independent industrial designers.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary and it is your right to withdraw at any point. Further, you have the right to request the complete removal of any released materials within 2 weeks of signing this consent form. You are not obliged to answer any question that you feel uncomfortabe with. You also have the right to be quoted anonymously if requested, and the confidentiality of any released materials will also be protected if you request.

Your comments may be used in my thesis document and thesis exhibition. I will obtain your written approval prior to any additional public presentation or publication of any research material containing your comments or images.

By signing below, you agree that you understand the project and agree to participate as described above.

______________________	________________	___________
Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Geoffrey Lilge	________________	___________
Researcher	**Signature**	**Date**

Geoffrey Lilge
Sessional Instructor : Furniture Design
Graduate Student / Industrial Design
Department of Art and Design
University of Alberta
glilge@ualberta.ca

Appendix E

Survey Questions

Title: Survey of emerging independent industrial designers

1. Education Level: Bachelor's / Masters Degree / PHD

2. Institution name(s):

   ____

3. Years since graduation?

   ____

4. On a 1 to 5 scale, rate your educational institution in terms of career guidance provided:

   ____

5. Your primary city of residence is :

   ____

6. Do you consider your city a 'design center'? (Yes/No)

7. If not, are you considering moving to a 'design center'? (Yes/No)

8. Which country is home to the largest number of your clients / customers?

   ____

9. Do you currently work part-time at another job? (Yes/No)

10. Have you worked as an employee in a freelance design office? If so, how long?

    ____

11. If yes, would you consider this design office 'well-known' or 'large'? (Yes/No)

12. Have you ever worked as an unpaid intern at a design office? How long?

    ____

13. Have you worked as an employee for a manufacturer? If so, how long?

    ____

14. Estimate % of your work week spent working on your independent design projects:

    ____

15. Do you currently practice as an individual or within a group?

____

16. Are you (or your group) incorporated as a company? (Yes / No)

17. How many of your designs are in production or development with a manufacturer?

____

If yes, a: Indicate # of licensing contracts w/ manufacturers attained through:

Commercial design/trade show exhibition ______
Direct contact (example:cold call) ______
Direct contact (mail) ______
School exhibition ______
Met client while working in another design office ______
Your Website ______
Media coverage ______
Design Agent ______

18. Do you sell your designs through Commercial Galleries (limited editions)? (Yes / No)

If yes, a: Is production in-house or through a sub-contractor?______

b: Indicate # of Gallery representations attained though:

Commercial design/trade show exhibition ______
Direct contact (cold call) ______
Direct contact (mail) ______
School exhibition ______
Referral ______
Your Website ______
Media coverage ______
Design Agent ______

19. Do you manufacture/distribute your own designs (serial self-production)? (Yes/No)

If yes, a: Is production in-house, through a supplier, or both?_____
b: Do you sell your products directly from your website? ______
c: Do you manufacture designs from other designers? ______

d: Estimate # of retail accounts attained through:

Commercial design/trade show exhibition ______
Direct contact (cold call) ______
Direct contact (mail) ______
Sales representatives/Distributors ______
Your Website ______
Media coverage ______

20. Which career route is of most interest to you:

Freelance consultant (for manufacturers) _____
Limited editions (for galleries) _____
Serial self-production (manufacturing) _____

21. What are the most important factors in your choice?

____
____
____

22. Do you or your group receive financial support from a private source or investor? (Yes/No)

23. How many major international design fairs / festivals do you attend per year?

____

24. Please estimate % of exhibition expenses covered by grants or sponsorship :

____

25. How many design fairs / shows have you participated as an exhibitor since graduation : ____________________________

26. Have you ever won an award at design fair/trade show? (Yes/No)

27. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate your exhibiting experiences at the following design/trade exhibitions:

Milan Design Week ______
New York Design Week ______
London Design Festival ______
Tokyo Designers Week ______
IDS : Toronto ______
IMM Cologne ______
Stockhom Furniture Fair ______
Maison & Objet : Paris ______
Other: ______

28. From your direct experience, name 3 companies you would classify as receptive to designers :

____
____
____

29. From your direct experience, name 3 companies you would classify as *not* receptive to designers :

____
____
____

30. Name 3 companies (manufacturers/galleries/retailers) you are most interested in collaboration :

____
____
____

31. Name 3 designers that you respect in terms of their career strategy / development :

32. Do you have a mentor within the industry? (Yes/No)

33. Please estimate # of media 'hits' featuring your independent design projects since graduation:

34. Which print media outlet has proved most productive for promoting your work?

35. Which internet media outlet has proved the most productive for promoting your work?

36. Do you use a press relations consultant/agent? (Yes/No)

37. Do you use a design agent? (Yes/No)

38. How content with your income are you, on a scale of 1 to 5? (1-5)

39. Estimate (%) of total personal income generated by your independent design projects:

40. Do you or your group receive financial support from a private source or investor? (Yes/No)

41. Do you have a strategic plan for your career development? (Yes / No)

42. How content with your career development are you, on a scale of 1 to 5?

43. What are the greatest contributors to your current successes?

44. What are the greatest challenges you currently face?

45. Please provide any additional comments that you feel would be beneficial to the project:

Appendix F

Questions for Expert Professionals

1. What was the biggest factor in your decision to manufacture your own designs?
2. What was the biggest factor in obtaining your first freelance design clients?
3. What would be your biggest reccomendation for emerging independent designers?
4. Did you have a mentor in your early days?
5. Did you work for another design consultancy prior to establishing your office?

Geoffrey Lilge
Sessional Instructor : Furniture Design
Graduate Student / Industrial Design
Department of Art and Design
University of Alberta
glilge@ualberta.ca

10.2 Appendix : ASL REB Research Approval Form

Arts, Science & Law Research Ethics Board (ASL REB)

Certificate of REB Approval for Fully-Detailed Research

Applicant: Geoffrey Lilge

Department / Faculty: Art and Design / Arts

Project Title: Career pathways for emerging independent industrial designers

Grant / Contract Agency (and number): N/A

(ASL REB member) **Application number**: 1972

Approval Expiry Date: January 21, 2010

CERTIFICATION of ASL REB APPROVAL

I have reviewed your application for research ethics review and have concluded that your p
research meets the University of Alberta standards for research involving human participan
Section 66). On behalf of the *Arts, Science & Law Research Ethics Board* (ASL REB), I a
ethics approval for your proposed research.

You may begin research with human participants.

This research ethics approval is valid for one year. To request a renewal to cover research
after January 21, 2010 please contact me and explain the circumstances, making reference
ethics review number assigned to this project (see above). Also, if there are significant cha
project that need to be reviewed, or if any adverse effects to human participants are encoun
research, please contact me immediately.

ASL REB member (name & signature): Federico Spinetti, Music Department

10.3 Appendix : Survey of Independent Industrial Designers

Hello Independent Industrial Designer:

Thank you for participating in this survey, which aims to provide insights to the difficult and challenging independent design route. I hope that this information proves to be useful for all.

This survey is for educational purposes only. All information collected will be analyzed in anonymous form only. Any personal information obtained from this survey will be held confidentially and will not be published. You can receive the anonymous group results upon completion of the survey, if you choose. Your participation is completely voluntary, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, feel free to skip them.

Survey responses are strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact Geoffrey Lilge at 780-634-9282 or by email at the email address specified below.

This survey has been reviewed and approved by the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts, Science & Laws Ethics Board and complies with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants.

By proceeding to the survey you therefore agree with the above statement.

Thank you for your time and support, please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below.

1. Education Level:

Bachelor's	34	58.62%
Masters Degree	24	41.38%

2. Institution name(s):

6	Rhode Island School of Design
5	Design Academy Eindhoven
4	University of Alberta
3	Royal College of Art
3	Central Saint Martins

3. Years since graduation:

35	1-5 years
13	6-10 years
10	11 + years

4. Your primary city of residence is :

32	Europe
25	North America
3	Asia

5. Do you consider your city a 'design center'?

Yes	36	61.0%
No	23	39.0%

6. Do you live within two hours travel time of the majority of your independent design clients?

Yes	37	62.7%
No	22	37.3%

7. Do you currently work other jobs?

Yes : Full-time	8
Yes : Part-time	19
No	32

8. Please estimate the number of hours a week that you spend on your independent design projects:

(see end of survey results doc for these numbers)

9. Please check your design-related work experience (check all that apply):

Large (Staff of 20 or more) Industrial Design Consultancy	11	17.2%
Less than Large Industrial Design Consultancy	21	32.8%
Unpaid Intern at an Industrial Design Consultancy	17	26.6%
Manufacturing Company	21	32.8%
Interior Design / Architectural Consultancy	17	26.6%
Design Education	33	46.9%
Other	11	17.2%

10. How is your Independent Industrial Design practice structured?

Individual : Not incorporated as a company	23	39.7%
Individual : Incorporated as a company	14	24.1%
Group : Non-incorporated co-operative	7	12.1%
Group : Legally incorporated as a Partnership or Company	14	24.1%

11. How many of your designs are in production or development with a manufacturer?

12. Approximately how many different manufacturers have you worked with in your career?

13. How did you meet the manufacturers you collaborate with? (Check all that apply):

They saw my design exhibited at a fair	33	82.5%
I introduced myself at their stand at a trade fair	12	30.0%
I mailed them concepts directly	13	32.5%
My Design Agent arranged the collaboration	6	15.0%
They saw my designs in the media	18	45.0%
I phoned them and arranged a meeting	19	47.5%
I was referred by another designer	15	37.5%
I met them while I was working in another design office	4	10.0%
I met them at a cocktail party, opening, etc.	12	30.0%

14. Please check all that apply regarding consulting with Manufacturers: (40 consulting designers)

I have received advances on design royalties	23	57.5%
I have received one-time payments for my design concepts instead of royalties	18	45.0%
I have had projects cancelled while in development with a company	21	52.5%
Overall, I have been satisfied with the size of royalties	13	32.5%
Overall, I have been dissappointed with the size of royalties	8	20.0%
I have experienced non-payment of royalties	8	20.0%
On occasion, I have been dissappointed with the production quality of my concept	24	60.0%

15. Are you represented by any Galleries?

Yes : Design / Art Galleries	26	41.3%
Yes : Craft Galleries	7	11.1%
No	30	47.6%

16. If you are represented by Galleries, do you handle production in-house or through a sub-contractor? (33 gallery designers)

I make my own objects	7	21.2%
I have somebody else make them	7	21.2%
A combination of the above methods	19	57.8%

17. If you are represented by Galleries, how did they hear about you? (Check all that apply)

They saw my work exhibited at a fair	18	54.5%
I mailed them materials directly	10	30.3%
My Design Agent	0	0.0%
They saw my designs in the media	21	63.6%
I phoned them and arranged a meeting	7	21.2%
I was referred by another designer	8	24.2%
I met the gallery owner at a cocktail party, opening, etc.	6	18.2%

18. If you are involved in Production / Distribution, please check all that apply:

I manufacture my own products in serial production in my studio and I distribute them.	16
I use a sub-contractor to manufacture my products (or parts) and I distribute them.	31
My company sub-contracts manufacturing and distribution of my products.	10
I sell my products directly to individual customers from my website or email inquiry.	34
I list and sell my products on websites like Etsy.	8
I sell products directly to customers at local craft fairs	12
I have fully developed a product, launched it on the Marketplace independently and at that point I sold the manufacturing/distribution rights to a major manufacturer.	7

18. If you Distribute your own designs to retail shops, which marketing methods have you used? (Check all that you feel have proven effective in generating sales)

Commercial Trade Fairs
I introduced myself in their shop and present materials
I mail unsolicited marketing materials (postcards, etc.)
Sales Representatives
Unsolicited Email
I send out press releases to the media

19. Which Independent career route is of the most interest to you?

Freelance Consultant for Industry
Limited Editions (through Galleries)
Serial (Unlimited) Production / Distribution of my own products to retailers.

20. What are the most important factors in your choice?

Freedom to do many diverse projects and let them go without dealing with production/distribution
Producing any products by myself needs a lot of investment & I can not be sure if I can get them back
talent to work and inspire companies from inside out
SATISFACTION IN SEEING MY DESIGNS/PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET.
i want to do all three
fun
freedom in developing my own concepts, chance to work with major companies with renown brands
allows me to focus on what I am best at doing.
Ability to perform service no matter of residence
avoid getting bogged down in marketing distribution, marketing etc.
keep design worked varied by working for different clients.
The potential of earning royalties through licensing agreements.
MONEY
Profit
freedom of creativity
Creative freedom, Good money
Own boss- freedom to create
Freedom
Independence and fun
Autonomy

Look at most working designers today and you will realize they work for manufacturers, clients and galleries. It's small niche market and you shouldn't limit yourself to one arena. Look at KGID - Industrial Design Consultancy... working with Magis, Plank. Also a Limited Editions market through Vitra. And selling through Gallery Kreo... - which isn't so different from serial work

LImited Editions (through Galleries) is too pretentious. I desire to design things that make a positive impact in people's lives –not just those who have money to pay for them (this is based on the assumption that works in galleries are over-priced and under-functional). Serial Production and Distribution is not appealing because it involves the actual manufacturing, which I do not have the capital to get going, nor do I have the patience to deal with all of the logistical problems. Thus, consulting is where I desire to work. i feel it is the most creative and rewarding part of the industry, although I'm sure that there would be opportunities to create limited editions and have them displayed in galleries, and to eventually own a production or distribution company if things go well as a consultancy.

Desire to create a product that can have an unlimited run and unlimited return.
Being a royalty based designer is to my mind too complicated in the sense that you are reliant on other manufacturers who tend to hold all the cards. The royalty percentages also mean that you either have to be doing very high volume or maintain a consistently high number of product in the market place.
I am autonomous in my creativity and Design. Have the most fun during my creative work.
Retaining the quality of objects by having a role in manf and development
(Actually both the first and second options are of equal interest to us. We feel the two disciplines sit well together.)

Consultancy: We enjoy solving the interesting problem of successfully aligning our own aesthetic ambitions with the needs of our business partner and with their customers. Secondly the payment system of royalties, provides some kind of regularity to our income.

Limited Edition: This provides us with the opportunity to make a far more self-directed aesthetic
In terms of income the results are potentially greater per hour of work done but are very unpredictable.

Importantly, we find the two disciplines work very well together in much the same way as couture fashion supports ready-to-wear products. In our gallery work we are able to be far more experimental and push boundaries, which demonstrates our thinking our company to potential manufacturing clients.

Retaining the quality of objects by having a role in manufacturing and development

Personal freedom, creative freedom

I am currently pursuing the 3. some limited editions, some large production to keep the income steady. And work as a consultant part time for another company.

Ability to have to have the most expressive point-of-view.
freedom to design/build new pieces constantly. Very little limitations. I make all of the decisions.
creative control, long-term income

21. How many major international design fairs do you attend every year as a non-exhibitor, on average?

1.77 Average (113.5 for 64 respondents)

22. Please estimate the number of design fairs you have participated as an exhibitor since graduation:

(break down per year)

23. Please rank your experiences as an exhibitor at the following design fairs:

	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Milan Design Week	2.5%	2.5	17.5	47.5	30
New York ICFF	0	18.2	22.7	45.5	13.6
London Design Festival	0	7.1	42.86	42.86	7.1
Tokyo Designers Week	5	5	45	40	5
IMM Cologne	0	25	50	18.8	6.3
Maison & Objet : Paris	0	10.5	36.8	42.1	10.5
New York Gift Show	0	22.2	11.1	66.7	0
IDS : Toronto	13.3	13.3	66.7	6.7	0

24. Please list any additional fairs you have had very positive exhibiting experiences at:

25. Please check the following statements that apply to you or your group:

I have a mentor in the industry.	12	18.8%
I have an office space outside of my residence.	26	40.6
I have a prototype workshop.	31	48.4
I have a production workshop.	14	21.8
I have a distribution warehouse.	7	10.9
I have a fully developed website.	42	65.6
I use a press relations consultant / agent.	6	9.4
I use a design agent.	5	7.8

I have a strategic plan for my career development,

including a business plan	20	31.3
I have developed my own personal brand / logo	38	59.4

26. Please estimate the number of media 'hits' featuring your independent design projects since graduation :

(BREAK DOWN PER YEAR)

27. Which print media outlet has proven most productive for attracting new clients?

elle decoration
Interni
Ottagono
Wallpaper(2)
Financial Times
homes and interiors
Azure
id
Elle Decor France
Vogue
T: New York Times Style Magazine (8)
designreport
CI Magazin
Box international design
Living at home
I.D
Grand Designs
Guardian
Observer
Die Gestalten Verlag Publishers
case da abitare
Frame
db bahn
Dwell Magazine
House & Home
Style at Home
Interior Design

"European press does not often pull in clients nor result in sales. But is good to build a trust in a designer. The more often they see you in the press, then more credibility"

"None - Press attracts press, not clients."

28. Which internet media outlet has proven most productive for attracting new clients?
Youngdesigner, dailyIcon, Designspotter
MOCOLOCO (7)
NOTCOT (5)
Dezeen (5)
Desigspotter (2)
Design sponge (1)
Core77 (5)
Designboom (4)
Dailyicon
Youngdesigner
Hidden art
HOKOHOKO.com
Dawanda.com
babyblau.com
Design milk
Daily candy
Ny times
Coolhunting

29. Please estimate % of your total personal income generated by your independent design projects :

(Break down by experience)

30. Do you or your group receive financial support? (Check all that apply)

Yes - Family	13.6
Yes - Private Investor	10.6
Yes - Government	22.7
No	53.0

31. How satisfied are you with your career development today?

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1.72%	8.62%	32.8	39.7	17.2

32. What are the greatest contributors to your current successes?

Luck, timing
University
network, knowing the people, knowledge of all ins and outs, good advisor, structured working, transparency, honesty, enthusiasm
Ability to focus and work hard when it counts. Communication skills.
own design language
Myself
hard work, media
Presented fully realized products for presentation.
Persistence, Faith in ability,
portfolio
ability to innovate
ability to communicate innovation
The curators and magazine editors that have been receptive to my work. This has resulted in international exhibitions and excellent publicity (which in turn gives you some credibility when approaching new clients)
HARD WORK
Drive, Goals
meeting the right people. being willing to takes risks.
Working with a group initially, media exposure, good design, going to parties, hard work
drive
myself
designer friends of designmetropole-aachen.com, design teacher friends and media friends.
further reading, practice
Work ethic. Involvement in industry / community. Attitude.
Commitment, following things through, unique creativity.
1 - The grace of God. 2 - The environmental and situational conditions under which I grew up. 3 - Hard work. 4 - I don't quit.
Collaborative design environment, supportive family and friends.
I have been fortunate enough to win a couple of high profile commissions. I have had some match funding from the UK government.
End customers... and small galleries and resellers...
Self promotion
Awards and Exhibitions
High risk taking
Consistency and tenacity
print and online media
Salone del Mobile
My gallery and my education
Graduate school. It provides me the time to develop my body of work.
Good ideas.
Professionalism in our business relationships.
Paying great attention to publicity.
Working hard.
i do what i like to do
The founding I have received, which makes it possible for me to continue to work non-commercially.
exhibition on fairs
continuity
schools PR system
good design, and well made products
Internet. word of mouth. keep working hard.
zig when they zag
Working with some of the biggest brands and most well-respected furniture companies within the first two years of my career.
Patience
Courage
Commitment

Excitement, enjoyment
Partnership
hard work and persistence
becoming more present/involved in the (Canadian) design community
Hard work, luck and knowing the right people

33. What are the greatest challenges you currently face?

Getting companies to take me seriously, and getting more exposure for my name/work.
To get in contacts with industry
to bring to next level
occasional laziness
making a living
Getting the products into production. Working full time, I don't have so much Time as I used to.
We found out that not only working with established brands is difficult, but even arranging a meeting or receiving a reply to an inquiry is almost impossible when you are a young designer without fame.
Capital required to develop new works.
Time to focus more on design while still earning enough money to live and fund designs
acquiring new clients
landing new clients that are receptive to young designers. It seems as though you remain as an 'emerging designer' for years, regardless of your success in the media or exhibitions, competitions etc. The (modern furniture) industry is arrogant and elitist. Very tough for young designers to penetrate.
CASH FLOW
Recession
Rising shipping costs and current economic situation
Lack of money
money
finance
marketing my designs, financing my new ideas, prototypes and their marketing, where the latter takes the biggest gulp.
financial
Making enough money. Money lags behind your success, ideas, projects.
Finding work. Isolation.
Finding clients who understand and are willing to pay for our services.
Raising capital for a start-up business (even before the market crash).
Balancing paid consulting and production hours with unpaid research and development hours. Competing with low-cost production overseas.
Lack of time and capital to both design, manufacture and promote my work
marketing and sales, time management,
financial asset
Seeking companies to collaborate with
Affording an independent studio space
Manufacturing aid
Economic slump / pace of selling/ expansion plans in order to maintain momentum and interest
Getting more clients
competition with overseas manufacturing, sales and distribution
coordinating office time with personal work, finding clients, paying prototypes
Finding the right studio situation and finding responsible sources of material
Finding a successful mode of practice in the Design/Art field.
The nature of our work provides erratic and unpredictable income, which means it is hard to invest the necessary sums at the right moment to develop the business in response to good opportunities.
read current global situation and adjust products to that direction
financial problems
own label and own sale
slowing economy, rebranding myself, getting higher end clients
marketing!
prototype costs
weak economy
how to build a better more effective strategy that will make growing the business easier.
location
that the biggest and best furniture companies in the US are all publicly owned, and therefore the companies worry more about appeasing their shareholders by continuing to pump out awful, earth-cluttering designs, than about creating beautiful, well-designed objects that actually mean something to people. And that the European companies are so far away.
Quality of out source manufacture
Material cost
Market confidence
Cash flow
making more money
deciding how to orient my design practice, particularly relating to production and distribution.
Finding the right city to live in
to be able to live by designing.

34. Please rate the career guidance regarding independent design careers provided by your educational institution:

Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
34.6	23.6	25.5	14.6	1.8

35. Please provide any additional comments that you feel would be beneficial to the project :

Design schools don't prepare the students adequately for what it takes to get a job and succeed in and ID firm, and they are even worse at preparing designers to work independently. This needs to change. No one even knows what fees to charge. The clients hold all the bargaining chips.
Looks very good survey. Good luck!
at this moment i earn my income as an art director mainly, not as a designer
Most important for independent designer is to be ready.
I do not have any education in Design. I think you forgot to think of that possibility.
To make a small fortune as an independent designer be sure to start with a large one.
This style of design career would benefit from an education covering similarities to artists and fashion designers. The idea of a designer covering all areas of self promotion, distribution and financial matters
Finding the more successful designers who are working on (arguably more important) projects outside of the media spotlight.
Overall, there are very few companies in Canada that work with designers.
Every career is different.
Biggest problem is always financing, and the timing and balance between copy right protection and publicity.
as long as each idea is better than the last u will get good.
I know designers who do exhibitions too and other design related work including teaching for money and mutual learning
A great disappointment to me is the lack of government funding available to design firms. There seems to be money trees for every person who is termed as either an Artist or a Manufacturer and seeks funding in this country. If we do not exist in our governments' eyes, how can we ever have success as designers?
Every instructor who I talked to about work in the field of industrial design in Edmonton said 'it's kind of a make-your-own-work field', offering no explanation of how to do that. There were no industrial design firms (and I mean that) in Edmonton when I graduated, leaving only 2 options. Option 1 - move. Option 2 - like every other ID grad who doesn't want to move, work for a company in a watered-down job that may or may not have 'design' in the description. I chose to create a new option - start a DESIGN FIRM. Not a furniture company, or a freelance operation - a real, legitimate design firm. Clients will come.
Speaking of clients: the only clients we have gained that didn't call from a
Obviously I don't know who you are sending this survey to but I think there is a difference between medium to large design companies and sole traders such as myself who are often producing the most interesting and innovative work but with very few resources. You might think about designing another survey for such designers? Thank you for including me in this survey though, I am v interested in reading

although we are independent industrial designers, we were educated in the field of Landscape Architecture. as a result, we may not be as familiar with the industry
I'm currently a graduate student. I may not fully compile with this survey as I have yet to establish a fully independent design practice.
It may be of interest to explain that our BA's were taken in Fine Art and not Design.
I am very new to this business and do not have much experience.
I do believe that being a designer in the US vs Europe is very different and your strategy needs to be totally different.
Put all your eggs in one basket or you'll never be happy on the other side.
intellectual property guidance.

10.4 Appendix : L40 product development timeline, 2007-2009

2007	**May**	Self-issued design brief
		Concept sketches
		Autocad 2D drawings
		Rhino modeling
	June	3D Renderings
		Enter L40 chair concept in DesignBoom / Depadova Competition
	August	Renderings completed

	September	Begin M.Des program
		Begin building chair prototypes
		Mill maple hardwood
		CNC cut router templates

October 30 Enter L41 chair in Asahagawa Chair Competition

December 15 Install plywood seat and back for the chair.

2008 **January** Show L41 chair at Interior Design Show 08 : Toronto

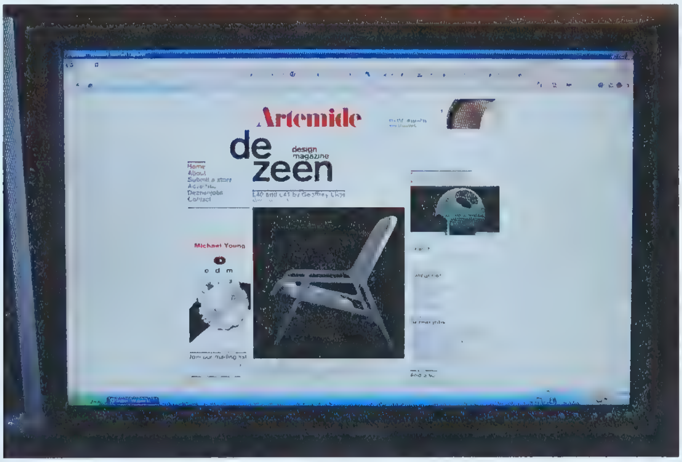
Febuary 14 Launch Personal portfolio website www.geoffreylilge.com

16 L41 Chair featured in Globe & Mail : "The Best of IDS, front page of Saturday Style section

21-24 IDS08 – L41 chair featured in 'Prototype' exhibition

26 L41 Chair featured on www.mocoloco.com

27 L40 / L41 story on www.dezeen.com 25,000 viewers



Mail 80 postcards to international manufacturers
(10 Canada / 63 International / 7 United States)

April 1 L40 featured on www.Mocoloco.com

16-20 Exhibit L40 chair at Salone Satelitte, Salone del Mobile, Milan, Italy Cappellini, Ligne Roset, plus a few Italian manufacturers. Network at various opening events throughout the week.

21 Coverage of the L40 chair in Azure Magazine (Canada).

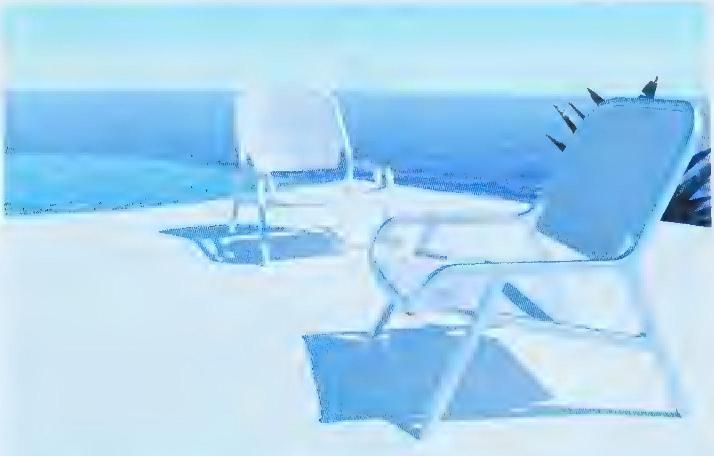
May 17-20 International Contemporary Furniture Fair, New York City

Herman Miller, Magis
Ingo Mauer, Jaime Hayon, Klaus Nienkamper
(Copy of press release in appendix)

25 Mailed photos of L40 chair to Director of Vitra Design Museum, on the advice of Ingo Mauer
Coverage in Western Living and Salon (Ukraine) Magazines

June Summer: Develop chair series in development w/company, Janus et cie. Establish business relationship with manufacturer: I travelled to Chicago to the NeoCon trade fair to meet with the manufacturer.

Product development with manufacturer: materials / processes /expanding the collection (tables)



Development renderings for Janue et Cie, summer 2008

July Intramourous (France) publishes a photo of the L40 chair

August Icon Magazine (UK) publishes a full page photo of the L40 chair

September **Prototype 1** : A teak prototype of the L40 chair was in development in the Phillipines, product development cancelled by Janus et Cie.

October L40 and L41 chairs featured in *Desire: The Shape of Things to Come,* a survey of international contemporary furniture published in Germany

10.5 Appendix : Press release, May 2008

Geoffrey Lilge

[illegible] 2003, Geoff was a founding partner of Pure Design, a manufacturer of furniture and home accessories. [illegible] rector, he initiated collaborations with many innovative designers to develop products for the company. [illegible] onal retailers included the MoMA Design Store, Design Within Reach, Colette (Paris), IDEE (Tokyo) and the [illegible] onran Shop (UK). The collection was exhibited internationally and was awarded the 2001 ICFF Editors' Award for [illegible]. Pure Design was listed in the MoMA Design Encyclopedia in 2003.

[illegible] Geoff introduces his new design consultancy.

On Design:

"[illegible] to design simple, beautiful objects that can be used for generations. My experiences in manufacturing [illegible] lowered my tolerance for concepts that are not innovative in multiple ways, primarily sustainability. In my [illegible] work, I am interested in design that achieves a seamless integration of form and function, where every line has [illegible], or two."

Contact: Geoffrey Lilge Design 11311-71 Street Edmonton Alberta Canada T5B 1V5
Telephone : 1.780.710.0100 geoff@geoffreylilge.com www.geoffreylilge.com

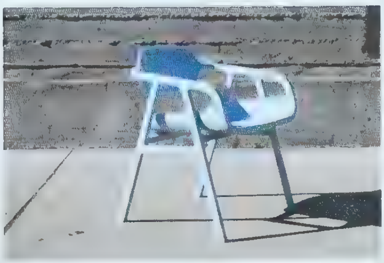
Images: Please request by photo number via email, (all images 300 dpi, product details will be included)


1.


2.


3.


4.


5.


6.

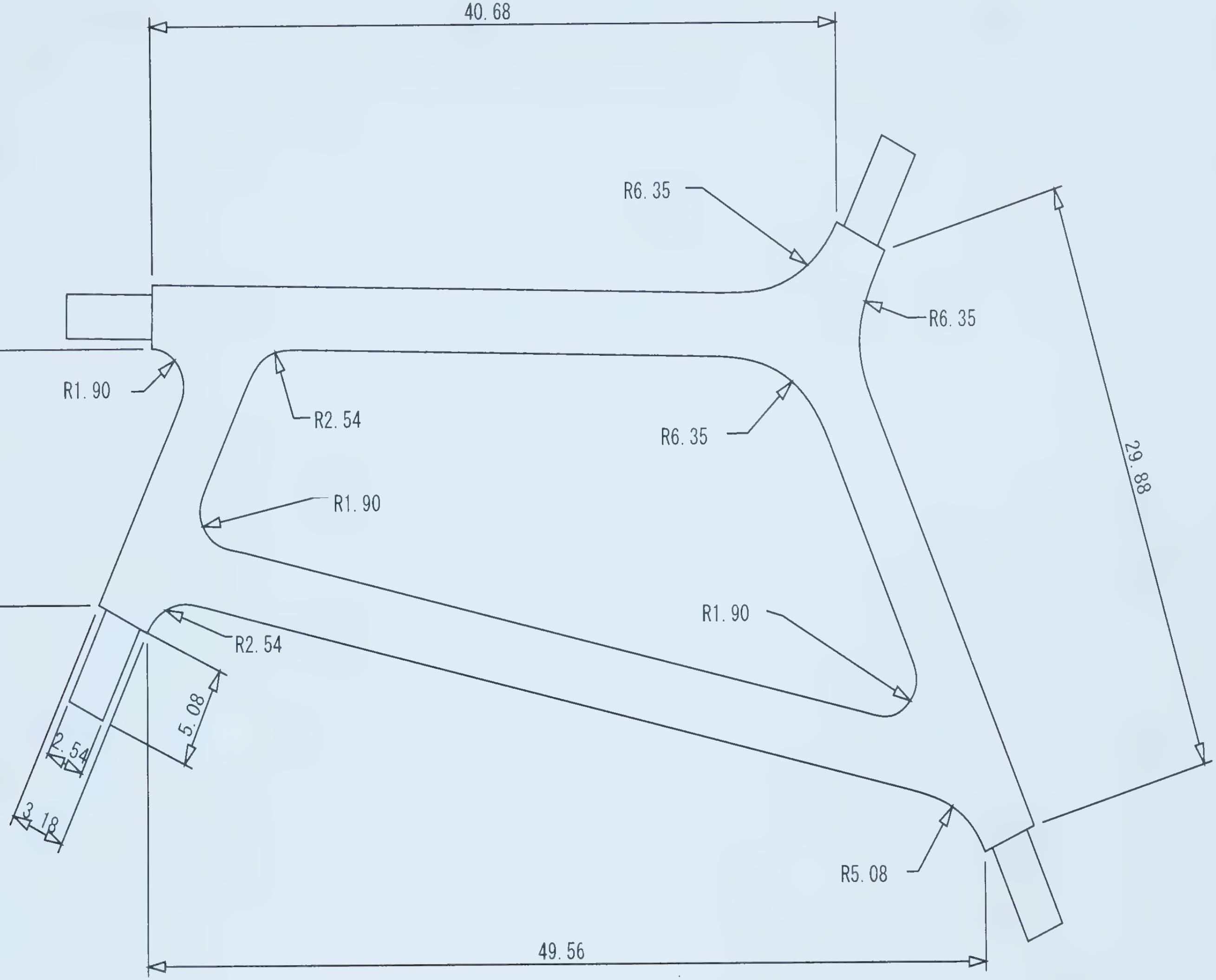

7.


8.


9.

10.6 L40 orthographic drawings, July/August 2008

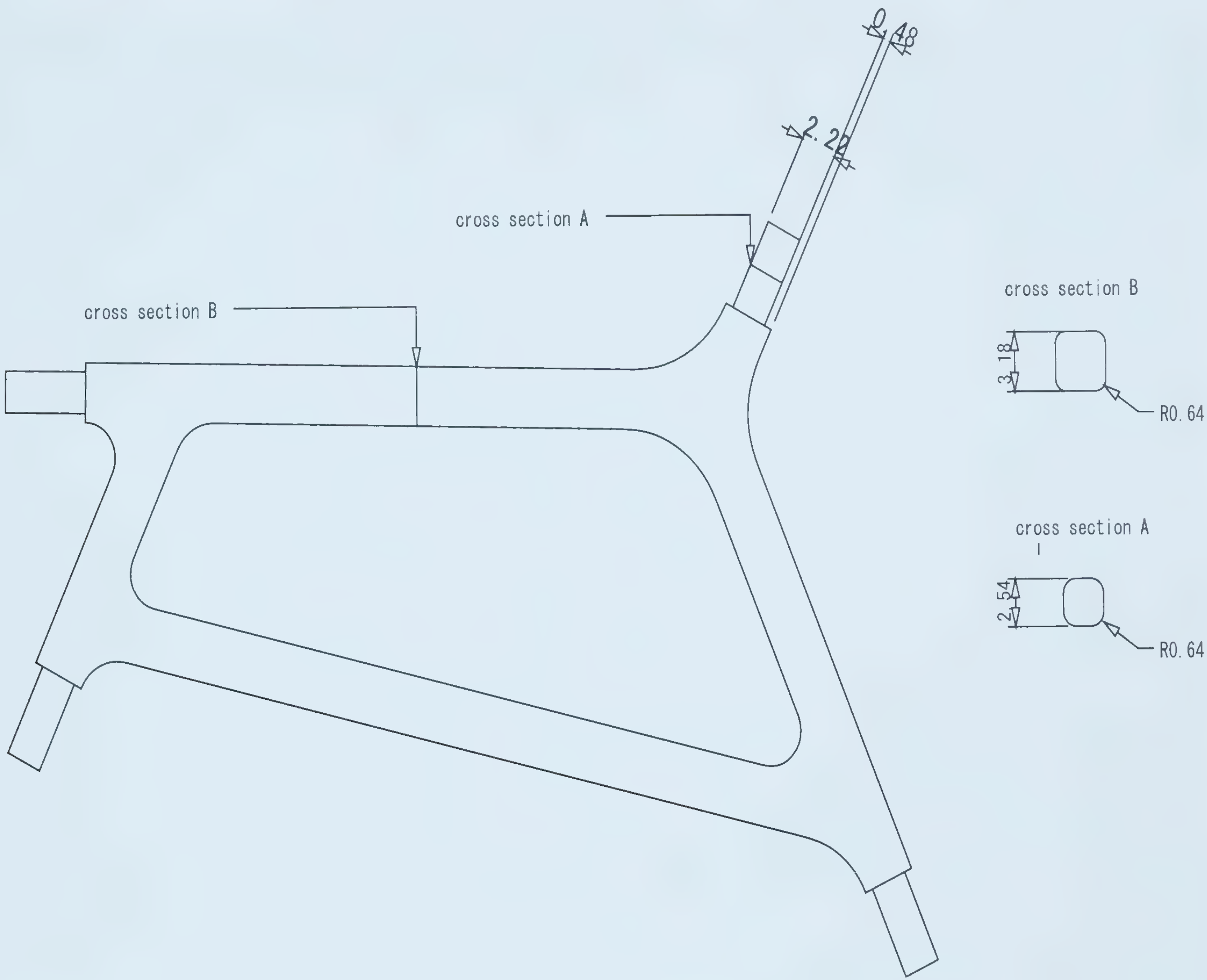
Side view



All units in centimetres. Not to scale

Geoffrey Lilge Design 11311 71 Street Edmonton Alberta Canada T5B 1V5 Tel. 780.710.0100 Email: geoff@geoffreylilge.com	TITLE L40 Lounge CLIENT Janus et cie DATE July 2008	1 of 5

Side view



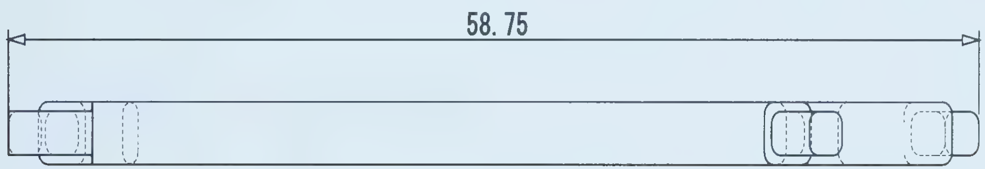
All units in centimetres. Not to scale

Geoffrey Lilge Design

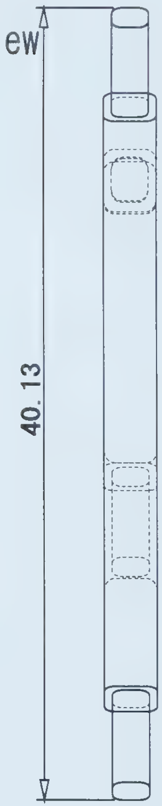
11311 71 Street Edmonton Alberta
Canada T5B 1V5 Tel. 780.710.0100
Email: geoff@geoffreylilge.com

TITLE	L40 Lounge
CLIENT	Janus et cie
DATE	July 2008

Top view

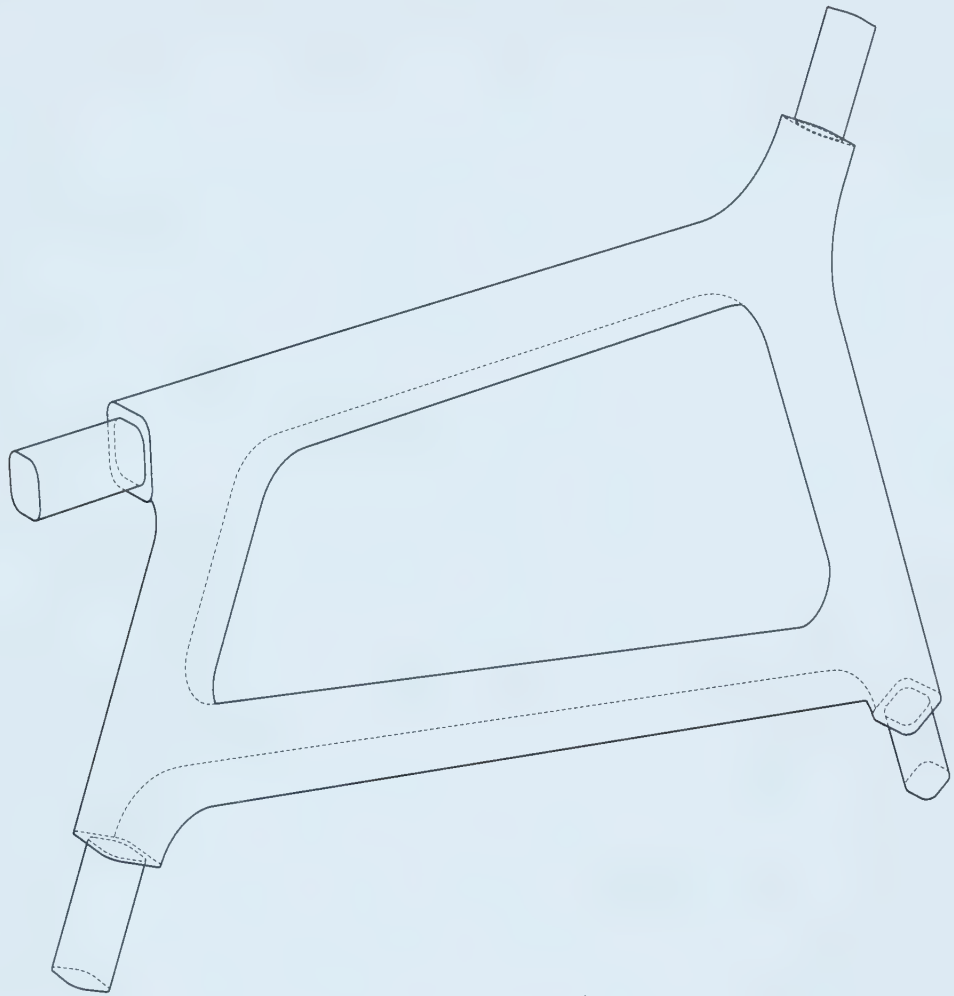


Front view



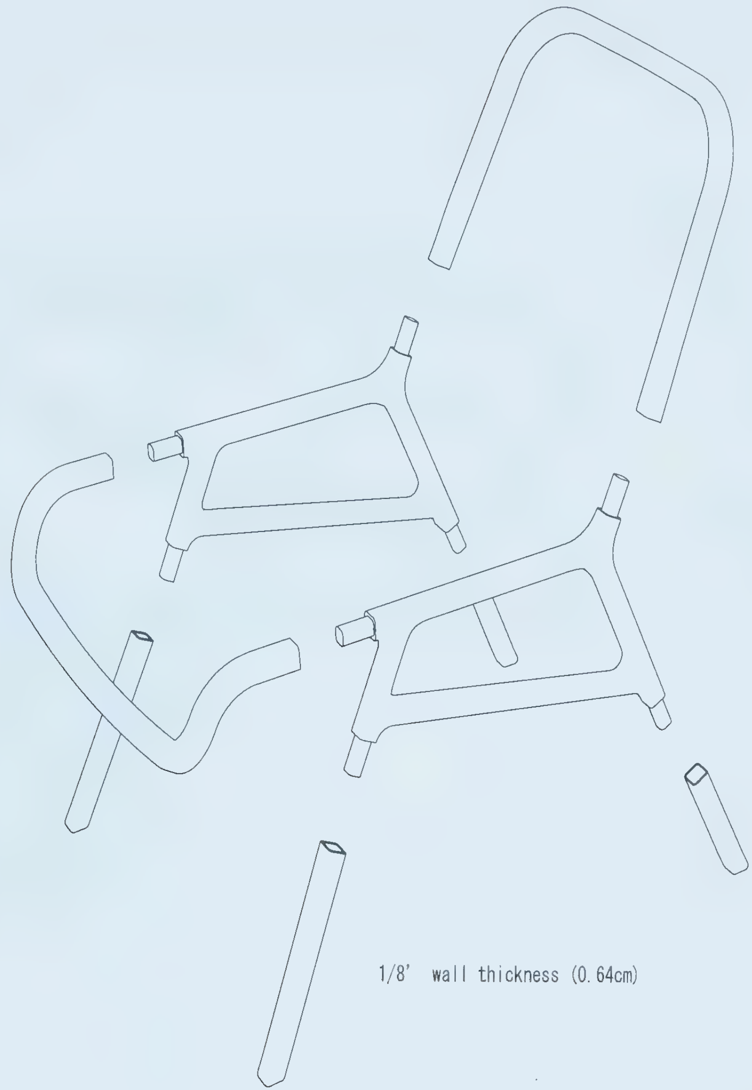
All units in centimetres. Not to scale

Geoffrey Lilge Design 11311 71 Street Edmonton Alberta Canada T5B 1V5 Tel. 780.710.0100 Email: geoff@geoffreylilge.com	TITLE L40 Lounge CLIENT Janus et cie DATE July 2008	3 of 5



All units in centimetres. Not to scale

Geoffrey Lilge Design 11311 71 Street Edmonton Alberta Canada T5B 1V5 Tel. 780.710.0100 Email: geoff@geoffreylilge.com	TITLE L40 Lounge CLIENT Janus et cie DATE July 2008	4 of 5



1/8' wall thickness (0.64cm)

All units in centimetres. Not to scale

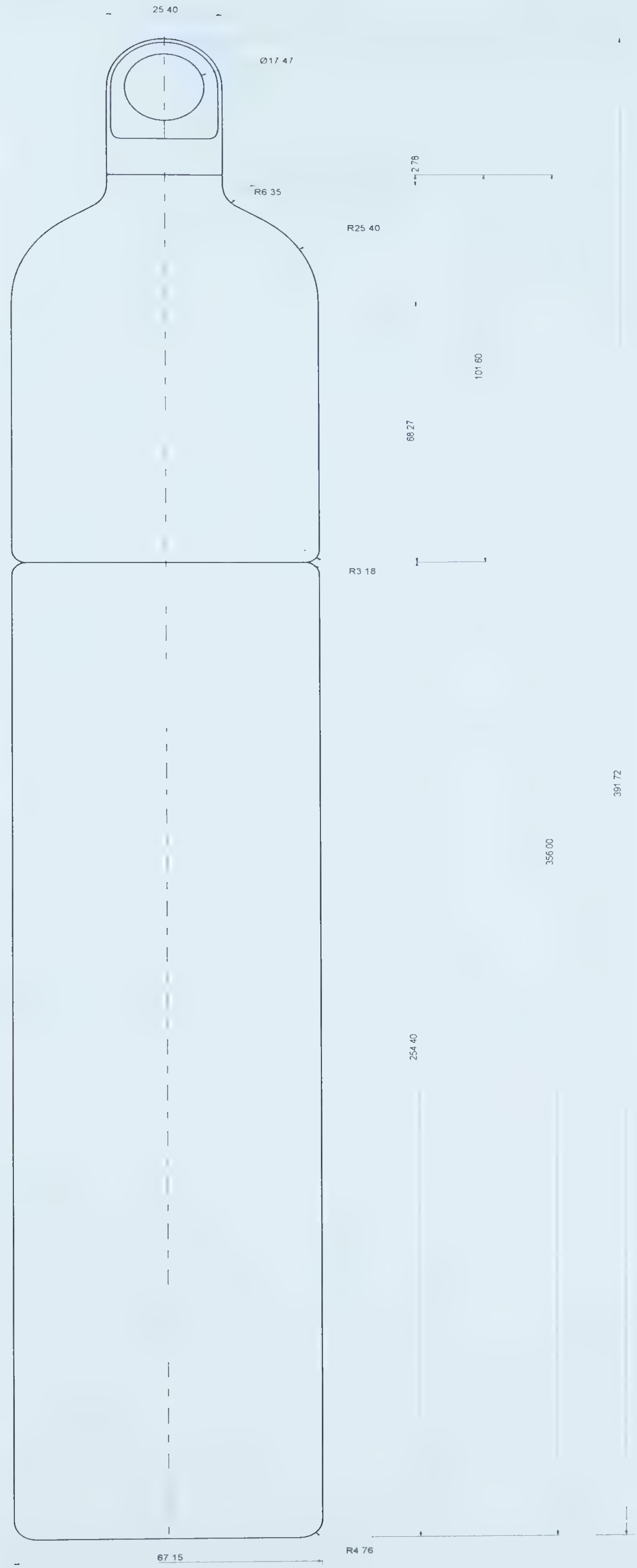
Geoffrey Lilge Design

11311 71 Street Edmonton Alberta
Canada T5B 1V5 Tel. 780.710.0100
Email: geoff@geoffreylilge.com

TITLE	L40 Lounge
CLIENT	Janus et cie
DATE	July 2008

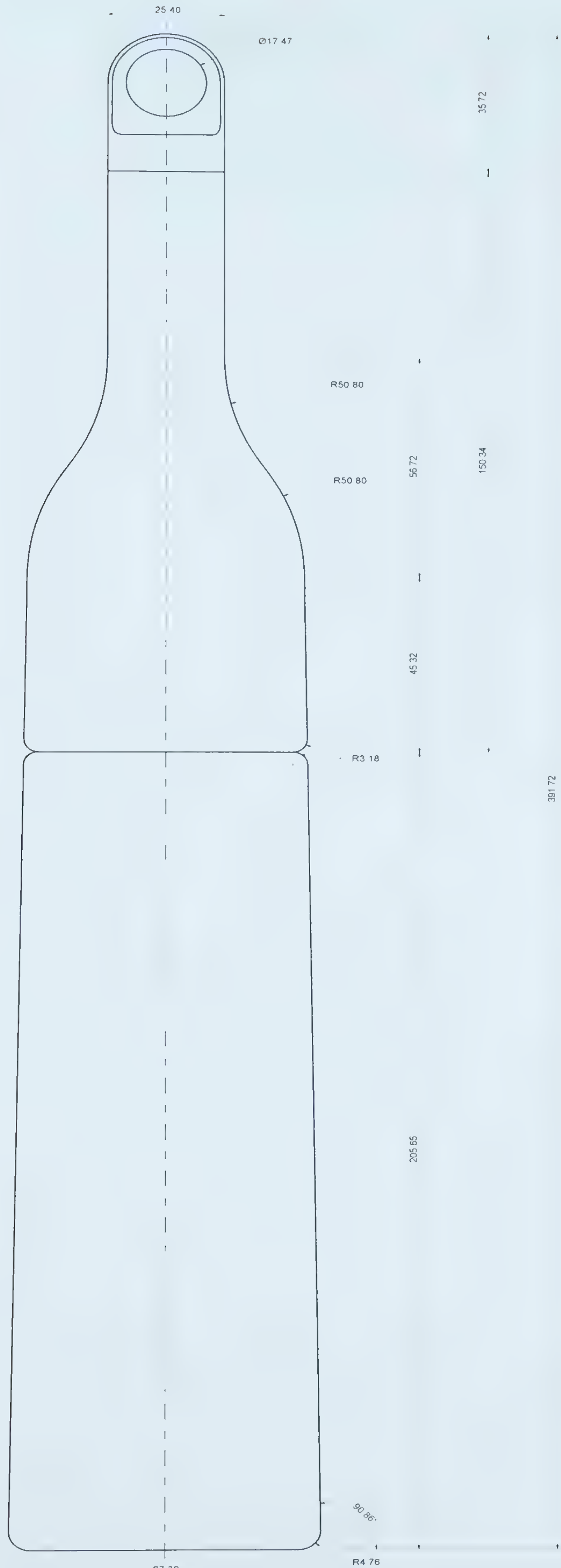
10.7 Appendix : L40 rendering, January 2009

10.8 Spice mill orthographic drawings, 2009



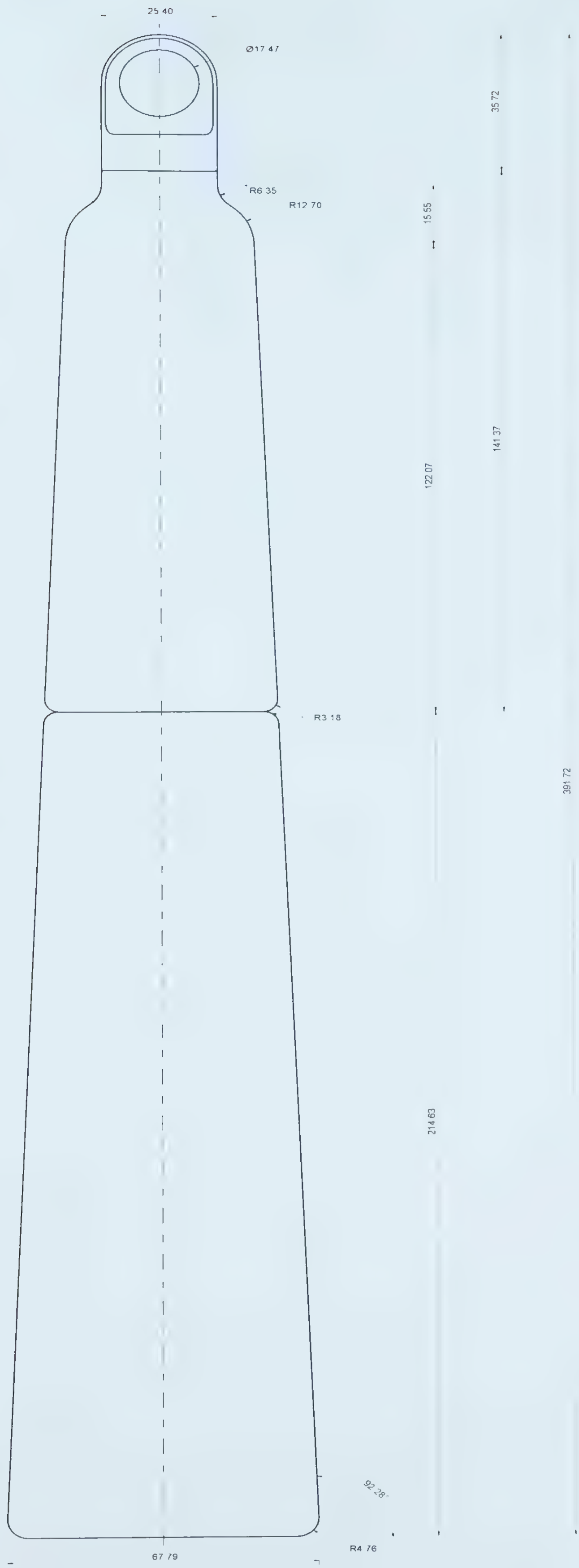
GeoffreyLilge

TITLE **L30 Spice Mill**	
CLIENT **Alessi spa**	
COMMENTS *Internal details on Sheet 4. Details of top brass nut on Sheet 6*	
ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS	SCALE **1:1**
	SHEET **1 of 6**



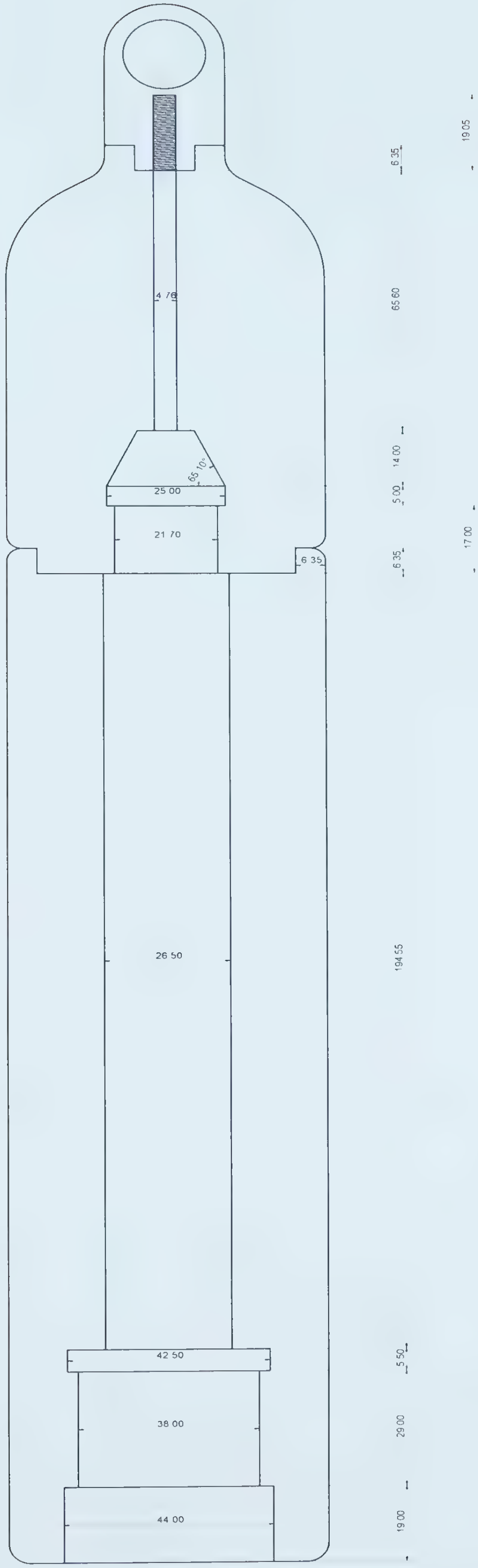
GeoffreyLilge

TITLE **L31 Spice Mill**	
CLIENT **Alessi spa**	
COMMENTS *Details of top brass nut on Sheet 6*	
ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS	SCALE **1:1**
	SHEET **2 of 6**



GeoffreyLilge

TITLE **L32 Spice Mill**	
CLIENT **Alessi spa**	
COMMENTS *Details of top brass nut on Sheet 6*	
ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS	SCALE **1:1**
	SHEET **3 of 6**



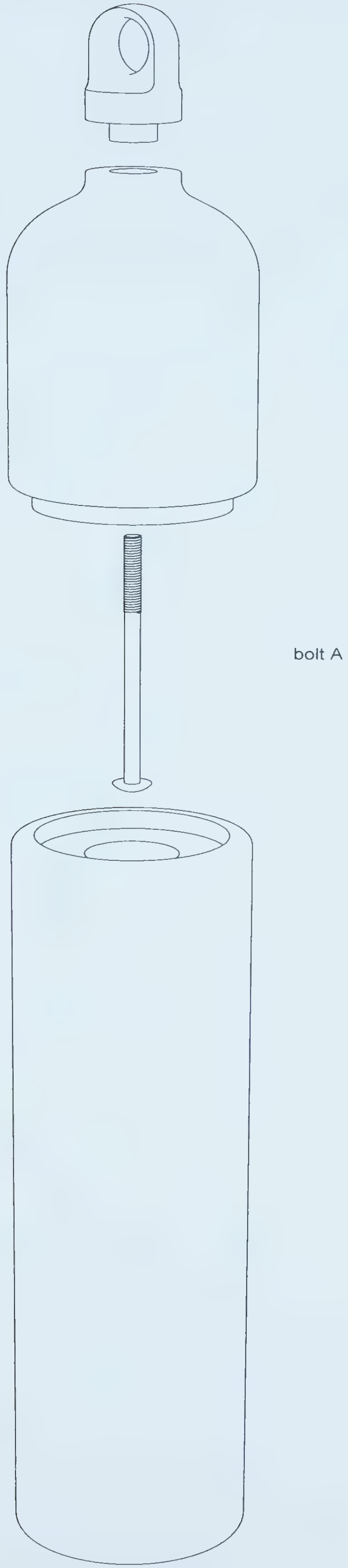
GeoffreyLilge

TITLE
L30 Spice Mill - Internal Detail

CLIENT
Alessi spa

COMMENTS
Inner Drilling to accomodate the CrushGrind® SHAFT

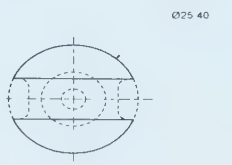
ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS	SCALE **1:1**
	SHEET **4 of 6**

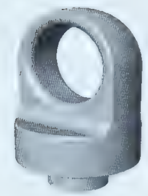


GeoffreyLilge

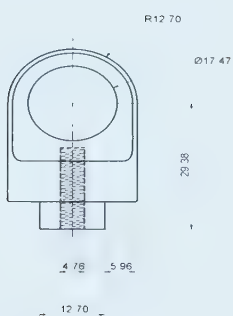
TITLE L30 Spice Mill - Exploded View	
CLIENT Alessi spa	
COMMENTS *Exploded view of spice mill with bolt to secure brass nut in place*	
ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS	SCALE not to scale
	SHEET 5 of 6

TOP VIEW



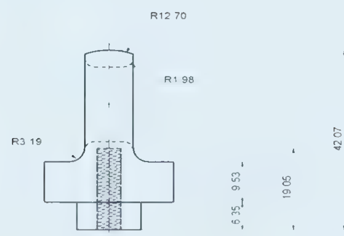


FRONT VIEW



threaded to receive bolt A

RIGHT SIDE

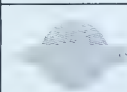


GeoffreyLilge

TITLE **Brass nut detail**	
CLIENT **Alessi spa**	
COMMENTS *Details for top brass nut on spice mills*	
ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS	SCALE **1:1**
	SHEET **6 of 6**

10.10 Board collection marketing materials and pricelist, 2010

2010 Canadian price list

	dimensions : l x w	shape	Item #	Wood	CDN$	Quantity	$ Total
Hole Slab Long	61 x 22cm (24"x9")		1.1.1	maple	150		
			1.1.2	walnut	150		
Hole Slab Round	52 x 41cm (20.5" x 16")		1.2.1	maple	170		
			1.2.2	walnut	170		
Hole Slab Large	66 x 39cm (26" x 15")		1.3.1	maple	190		
			1.3.2	walnut	190		
Hole Slab X-Large	67 x 51cm (26" x 20")		1.4.1	maple	250		
			1.4.2	walnut	250		
Table Deck Stubby	46 x 31cm (18" x 12")		3.1.1	maple	140		
			3.1.2	walnut	140		
Table Deck X-Large	70 x 22cm (28" x 8.5")		3.2.1	maple	160		
			3.2.2	walnut	160		
Bibo Paddle	55 x 36 cm (21.5" x 14")		4.1.1	maple	150		
			4.1.2	walnut	150		
Bibo Tray	66 x 40 cm (26" x 16")		4.3.1	maple	200		
			4.3.2	walnut	200		
						Grand total:	

Sold to:

Order date:

Ship to :

Purchase order #

Address:

City:

Province/State:

Postal Code/ZIP:

Buyer:

Billing Email:

Fed ID #

Telephone:

Ship via:

Account #

Ship Date:

Payment Method: ☐ **Visa** ☐ **MC**

Card number:

Cardholder name:

Cardholders signature

Orders

Our studio aims to be a paperless environment. Please download the PDF order form at www.geoffreylilge.com (in the download section). Orders can be emailed to geoff@geoffreylilge.com or mailed to: Geoffrey Lilge 11311-71 Street Edmonton Alberta Canada T5B 1V5. A minimum $750 order is required to open a wholesale account.

Payment

All boards are handmade to order. All prices in Canadian funds. Payment to be received in full prior to shipping. Payments accepted via Paypal (geoff@geoffreylilge.com (Paypal accepts Visa / Mastercard), or Visa, Mastercard, bank wire or company cheque. Bank Transfer Details : Geoffrey Lilge TD Canada Trust

Shipping

FOB Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Shipping charges, customs/brokerage fees and applicable taxes are the responsibility of the purchaser. Prices are subject to change without notice. Standard delivery is UPS or FedEx Ground. Purchaser may designate freight collect or provide carrier account number to bill.

Exchange Policy

All sales are final. Freight damages or defective items must be reported via email within 2 business days of receipt, and can be exchanged for identical items. Each board is handmade from natural materials. Wood grain and color will vary.

Care and use of boards

All cutting boards should be washed only with hot water and soap, do not wash in a dishwasher. Rinse and air dry or dry with paper towel. Keep dry when not in use. An occasional sanding (600 grit) will return a wooden board to a smooth luster. But never scrub a wooden board with a steel brush (a steel brush will ruff up the finish and should be avoided). Wooden boards need oiling once a week to seal the grain against bacteria. An oil finish helps to prevent the wood from cracking or pulling apart at the seams. Use a product that is (1) edible; and (2) tasteless. USP-grade mineral oil is a popular choice as it is the cheapest pure food-grade oil you can buy (do not use vegetable or olive oil because it can turn rancid). Before applying oil to butcher block, warm the oil slightly. Apply oil with a soft cloth, in the direction of the grain, allowing the oil to soak in. Allow oil to soak in a few minutes, then remove all surface oil with a dry, clean cloth.

10.11 Board collection launch event poster, October 2010

10.12 Board collection website design, November 2010

10.13 Board collection online store design, November 2010

10.14 Board collection media coverage, November 2010

hans across the water

In the spirit of international co-operation, Sherbrooke Liquor and Danish brewer Raasted Bryghus have teamed up to do what their respective governments cannot do — come to terms over Hans Island. "We expect the 1.5L Imperial Vanilla Stout to arrive sometime in November," says Jim Pettinger of Sherbrooke, "at which point we'll invite Stephen Harper and Lars Løkke Rasmussen to sit down over a beer and sort out this little brouhaha. Make beer, not war."

Sparkling fresh fruit goodness

product of the year

Prediction: the hot product of 2010 will be designer Geoff Lilge's gorgeous, and useful wooden boards. Launched in October at 29 Armstrong, the hand-finished boards come in two shapes and two finishes: maple and walnut ($150 and up, largest size is 26" x 20"). The boards are made in Edmonton with a group of design students assisting in the production. The maple boards can be used for cutting, the walnut finish is best for charcuterie or cheeses. Find the boards at 29 Armstrong (10129 104 Street, 780-758-4940) and geoffreylilge.com for now, but expect to see them in other shops in time for Christmas.

Handmade right here in Edmonton

the goods homes & design

so posh

The Posh at Home folks have their eyes on choice Canadian lines like Quebec's Verbois and Ontario's Marc Antonio. (Check out their opulent Melrose sofa studded with Swarovski crystals for $4,145.) But may we point out that they've also started carrying CHERNER CHAIRS? These sleek moulded plywood beauties are icons of mid-century design. The classic side chair and the armchair (from $820) are available in seven finishes. (Hint: beech and walnut are safe bets.)

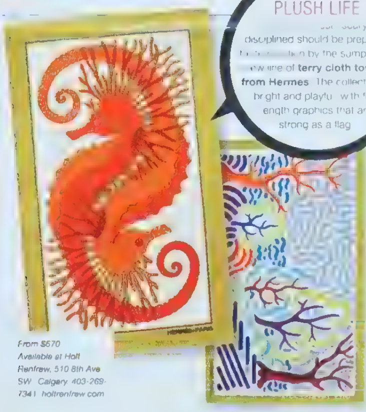
HABITAT RESTAURANT Canmore has upped the [illegible] the opening of the Me[illegible] Hotel's high style des[illegible] Rockies Resort. Hit **Habitat** [illegible] restaurant—with a view [illegible] Chef Vincent L[illegible] Alberta's love for all things meat with [illegible] dishes including Peking duck [illegible] mashed potatoes. [illegible] St, Canmore, Alb[illegible] [illegible] 228, granderock[illegible]

NOBLE BEGINNINGS [illegible] Chef Michael Noble has opened Notable, a 132-seat room in Calgary's old Montgomery neighb[illegible] ambien[illegible] Alberta [illegible] and a wood-burning rotisserie. A laid-back menu is delivered from a kitchen full of boisterous chefs who double as the [illegible] notablerestaurant works.ca

Chef Michael Noble

PLUSH LIFE

[illegible] disciplined should be prepared [illegible] by the sumptuous [illegible] line of **terry cloth towels from Hermes**. The collection is bright and playful with full-length graphics that are strong as a flag.



From $570 Available at Holt Renfrew, 510 8th Ave SW, Calgary, 403-269-7341, holtrenfrew.com

Tray Chic

Tired of pretending your chopping board was meant for serving? Edmonton designer Geoffrey Lilge (founder of Pure Design) is releasing a line of [illegible] 24 inches by 9 inches) in solid walnut with a natural oil finish ($150). Find them after October 22.

Available at 29 Armstrong, 10129 104 St, Edmonton, 780-758-4940, 29armstrong.com; Culina Highlands, 6509 112th Ave, Edmonton, 780-477-2422, culinafamily.ca

Geoffrey Lilge : DVD Image List

1. File name: lilge.01
   Title: Board Collection
   Date: 2010
   Material: Walnut
   Dimensions: Varies

2. File name: lilge.02
   Title: L40 Chair
   Date: 2008
   Material: Maple, Plywood, Fibreglass
   Dimensions: Height 33” x Width 28” x Length 38”

3. File name: lilge.03
   Title: Granata Spice Mill
   Date: 2010
   Material: Walnut, Brass, Plastic
   Dimensions: Height 14”

4. Geoffrey Lilge CV 2011

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